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Work Sites Of Public And White-Collar Workers

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY THEME STUDY

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Eric Arnesen, Alan Derickson, James Green, Walter Licht, and Marjorie Murphy/ Historians; Susan Cianci Salvatore/Preservation Planner

organization University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Illinois at Chicago, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

date January 2003

street & number 1849 C Street NW, 2280

telephone 202-354-2210

city or town Washington

state DC

zip code 20240

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

American Labor History Theme Study

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

State _____

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS



Giant textile mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection [LC-USF34-042893-D DLC]

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

In 1991, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 102-101 authorizing a National Historic Landmark Theme Study on American Labor History. This study identifies key sites that commemorate the history of American laborers and their activities, the impact of industrial and technological change, and the contributions of workers to the country's development. The essays show how labor history can identify potential National Historic Landmarks against the complex backdrop of civil rights, race, gender, and democracy. An overview is provided with the intent that additional research will yield new chapters illustrated by authentic places in labor's continuing story.

MARKING LABOR HISTORY ON THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE¹

Recognizing places significant to labor history helps connect the stories of workers to national historical developments. Visitors to these sites have the opportunity to consider events often ignored by mainstream historical sources. Recently, historians have discovered a popular interest in rediscovering labor's past and in reinterpreting the contribution of working people to local and national development. To this end, workers have collaborated with historians in this process of democratizing and publicizing the past.²

The greatest national sites can be seen not only as construction and engineering marvels, but also as sites where labor history was made. For example, the Hoover Dam, completed in 1935, is associated with the nearby Boulder City Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a company town that kept out union organizers and African Americans.³ In 1931, construction workers quit in protest against dangerous working conditions and a killing pace, only to be replaced by the unemployed from Las Vegas. Not until passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 did union organizers establish locals to shape conditions and labor terms for the project's completion.

Railroad, lumbering, mining, and manufacturing sites represent locations largely populated by the working class. Textile and clothing industries—the two largest 19th century industries—along with two other enormous sectors, domestic servants and agricultural laborers, included women and children at work with men. Some occupations were tied directly or indirectly to agriculture, including the antebellum Southern slave economy. In the past three decades some of the most exciting research by labor historians concerns women and people of color once ignored by scholars of labor and industry. A greater understanding of the diversity and complexity of the work force created by the industrial revolution is perhaps the leading achievement of the new labor history.

¹ James Green, Professor of History and Labor Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, prepared this introductory essay. Dr. Green specializes in the study of social movements, particularly those involving workers and unions, and in the presentation of people's history to the public. His books include *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000) and the co-authored *Commonwealth of Toil: Chapters in the History of Massachusetts Workers and Their Unions* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

² For further exploration of how workers' stories and places of memory contribute to a deeper public awareness of history and of movements for social change, see James Green, *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

³ The public suggested many of the sites discussed in this introductory essay. The explanations accompanying these suggestions have been used extensively as illustrations.

THE NEW LABOR HISTORY

The traditional approach to labor history adopted a grand narrative form in which heroic workers and their unions marched, bent but not bowed, toward a better future, culminating in the New Deal and federal labor law reforms. However, this approach often neglected workers outside of both the small core of tradesmen unionized before 1935 and the expanded core of industrial, commercial, and municipal workers unionized since World War II. The new labor history, sensitive to the racial, ethnic, and gender politics of the 1960s and 1970s, tells a much wider range of stories by women and workers of color who never belonged to unions or who were neglected or discriminated against within unions. New themes arise in these studies that focus, not on the trade union as an institution, but on familial, communal, and cultural resources working people used to survive. Indeed, the new labor history often abandons the traditional narrative form, and, instead of telling stories about working people, its practitioners have adopted social science methods of analysis. Some historians bemoan the lack of synthesis in the new social history and attempt a new narrative in which the old progressive story is integrated with the stories of women and minorities.⁴

At the same time, working people themselves, often unaware of the new labor history scholarship, continue to tell stories about their past and about places of historic importance. In particular, union officials have created an institutional memory of stories highlighting accomplishments of the founders. In some communities, unions have tales of suffering about those who paid the ultimate price for workers' rights. In other communities, stories are hidden from history because recollection threatens local powers and mores.

The field of labor history itself is new. In the first half of the 20th century, labor history enjoyed little academic status. A sub-field of economics, it made virtually no impact on the historical profession until the 1960s, when a new generation of researchers began to place labor history in the wider context of social history.⁵ This work made the field one of the most exciting areas in the American historical profession and made it possible to understand working people's lives within the larger vistas opened up by the new social history. For example, Herbert Gutman extended the time line of labor history before the industrial revolution to include the lives and cultures of "pre-industrial" artisans and laborers, and he extended the scope of labor history to embrace African American struggles.

Younger historians, aroused by the social movements of the 1960s, eagerly followed the lead of these pioneering social historians, and three decades later scholars still produce illuminating studies of a range of working-class experiences. From this body of scholarship, historians have written essays for this study that survey the research on major occupational groupings in manufacturing, extractive industries, and transportation.

⁴ For a recent synthesis see "The American Social History Project," *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture and Society* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2000), vol. II.

⁵ David Brody, *Steelworkers, The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Herbert Gutman, "The Workers Search for Power," in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963); David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1860-1880* (New York: Knopf, 1967).

LABOR HISTORY THEMES

Organizing the study by occupational groups allows for an assessment of research by social historians who have studied a wide variety of working people: union and non-union, native and foreign-born, male and female, white and black, northern and southern, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Beyond this occupational framework, which captures the diversity of working-class history, the following themes emerged.

First, **working and moving** were linked. The experience of working for wages meant moving from job to job and to different locations. Second, life was short for those in working-class industrial areas. Working for a **living and dying** young were also linked. Social and environmental approaches to labor history have been joined to capture familial and communal life shaped by environment. Third, **playing and praying** influenced cultural and social life among working people. Recreational and religious activity did not concern labor historians until recently, when they discovered that workers often used chapels, saloons, clubs, and ballparks as places to express values and even oppositional ideas. Fourth, historians have taken a new interest in working-class intellectual life, recalling the critical importance of **teaching and learning** to workers and their organizations. Fifth, **organizing and struggling**, the traditional concerns of labor history, are considered together. Union organizing, collective bargaining, striking, boycotting, and political activity have recently been studied in a wider social and cultural context. Workers are seen not only as economic beings, but also as family and community members, and as citizens and agents of democratic change. The struggle for workers' rights extended far beyond the right to work eight hours, the right to join a free trade union, and the right to collective bargaining. It also involved a crusade to extend the Bill of Rights to working people. In sum, these experiences suggest sites that include, but go beyond, factories, mills, union halls, and strike scenes.

Working and Moving

Working for a living forced many laborers in the late 19th century to keep moving. Historian David Montgomery writes of "common laborers" who, "whether by choice or necessity, . . . moved incessantly from one job to another."⁶ In many cases, little remains to represent the transience of this work force. Laborers moved quietly, even stealthily, day and night. They passed through fields, camps, and factory towns, often leaving few traces. When laborers died, their graves frequently were unmarked. For example, in Mt. Cavalry Cemetery in McAlester, Oklahoma, a mass grave holds the remains of 32 Mexican immigrant miners who died in a gas explosion at the Bollen mine on December 17, 1929.

According to Zaragaso Vargas, a scholar of Chicano labor history, the tendency to neglect western workers of color has "fostered unreal images" of passivity among minority workers who have "been denied a just measure of recognition" for their labor history legacy. The Golden Spike National Historic Site in Premonitory, Utah, recognizes the completion of the transcontinental railroad, but not the contribution of thousands of Chinese laborers who

⁶ David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State and American Labor Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 87.

"constructed the most difficult part of the Central Pacific Railroad through the Sierra Nevada Mountains."⁷

The arrival of immigrants is recognized in two hallowed historical sites, Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Using the Statue of Liberty to understand how immigrant history is being presented to the public, John Bodnar argues that one theme emerges: "the notion that immigration to this country was essentially a strike for personal freedom and the enhancement of individual opportunity." Rendering immigrants as one-dimensional, the current view ignores the fuller immigrant agenda, including the desire to return home, which "a substantial portion did." Immigrants were not "huddled masses" sharing a common goal, writes Bodnar, "but divided masses debating life goals and strategies." Many immigrants were "at least ambivalent about promoting individualism over communal solidarity." For example, "working-class newcomers" who lacked a comfortable margin of economic security, "affirmed collectivism time and again." Bodnar concludes, "The triumph of some national symbols such as the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, however, does not mean that no other historic traditions exist."⁸

While many sites represent working conditions, drawing attention to living conditions is challenging. Some living conditions are represented in museum exhibits and restorations (like the Workers' Home in South Bend, Indiana, restored by the Carpenters Union), but sites with "physical integrity" are not easy to locate. The National Park Service has designated working-class districts as National Historic Landmarks. Examples include Ybor City in Tampa, Florida, where Cuban and Spanish American cigar workers created a thriving union and radical culture, and Barrio de Analco in Sante Fe, New Mexico, with its traditional adobe structures, perhaps the oldest plebeian dwellings in North America. Opportunities exist to recognize workers' housing throughout the U.S. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum at 97 Orchard Street in New York City includes some exhibits of working-class domestic life and offers a walking tour of famous neighborhoods. A number of suggestions for consideration in this study feature company housing for coal, steel, and textile workers, such as Pocahontas, Virginia. There, in 1884, the worst mining disaster of the time snuffed out 114 miners' lives. Today, much of the company housing remains, along with the former company store building.

Living and Dying

Working as a laborer often meant dying prematurely. The horrific extent of workplace fatalities was hidden from public view, except when a lethal "accident" or "disaster" hit the front page of newspapers. The extractive essay in this study explains why these industries operated at such a murderous pace. Underground miners died by the thousands each year in gas explosions and rock falls. The death rate among these workers from silicosis, although difficult to measure, was perhaps even deadlier.⁹

⁷ Quote from transcript of Labor History Theme Study Conference, Lowell National Park, June 26, 1992. Thanks to Marty Blatt, supervisory historian at Lowell, for a copy of this transcript. In the years following this conference the Golden Spike National Historic Site has, and continues, to make efforts to increase the recognition of all the groups who built the railroad.

⁸ John Bodnar, "Symbols and Servants: Immigrant America and the Limits of Public History," *Journal of American History*, vol. 73 (1986), 137, 143-44.

⁹ Alan Derickson, *Workers' Health, Workers' Democracy: The Western Miners' Struggle, 1891-1925* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 38, 39-56.

In Avondale, Pennsylvania, a mine disaster led to the first state safety legislation. In Monongah, West Virginia, 361 miners died in a 1907 explosion that led to national safety reform. In the Triangle Shirtwaist factory building, near Washington Square, New York, 146 young women perished from fire on a spring afternoon in 1911 by suffocation, burns, or being killed while leaping from the flames. Other sites of national fame, like the Hoover Dam, are actual tombs for dead workers buried in the concrete.

For most laborers, the experience of working could not be separated from the fear of death or injury, so they created institutions to bury the dead or to care for the crippled and the survivors. Union miners, for example, built clinics and hospitals in the minefields. At least one of the 25 union hospitals erected by the Western Federation of Miners between 1897 and 1918 might survive to mark this tradition of concern about the fearsome realities of underground work.¹⁰ Beyond workplace injuries and fatalities, the nature of life in industrial America created a toxic environment for those living in working-class neighborhoods. Novelists captured the dreary, unhealthy quality of blue-collar America life in powerful books like *The Jungle*, *Yonondio*, *The Dollmaker*, and *Out of This Furnace*.¹¹

Perhaps the most important theme in the new social history of workers has to do with cultural life. The old institutional school of labor history treated workers as job-conscious "economic men" (women, children, and non-union laboring men were often overlooked). The new labor history is sensitive to workers' desire to have personal time—"eight hours for what we will"—time to be parents, play ball, drink coffee or beer, attend festivals, weddings, and wakes, march in parades, read in libraries, go to musicals and later to the movies, listen to speeches and attend union meetings.¹² The two most powerful labor movements of the 19th century were not concerned directly with wages. The crusades for the ten-hour day and the eight-hour day showed that wage earners wanted to work to live—not live to work.

New labor historians have examined workers' social worlds, portraying wage earners and their families as cultural beings, not as human machinery. In his most noted essay, Herbert Gutman writes, "Men and women who sell their labor to an employer bring more to a new or changing work situation than their physical presence." The interaction between their cultures and the forces of the workplace created a constant cycle of conflict and adaptation.¹³ The cultural tension between the lives of "pre-industrial" people and the demands of industrial work underlies the social history of the nation's working majority. For Gutman "the history of the American working-class was the history of the United States."¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹¹ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York, New York: Signet Classic, c2001); Tillie Olson, *Yonondio* (New York: Delta, 1974); Harriet Arnow, *The Dollmaker* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, c1954); Thomas Bell, *Out of This Furnace* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, c1991).

¹² For an excellent study of these concerns, see Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers & Leisure in an Industrial City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹³ Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 10-11, 18.

¹⁴ Ira Berlin, "Herbert Gutman and the American Working Class," in Herbert G. Gutman, *Power & Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, ed. by Ira Berlin (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 39.

Praying and Playing

It is difficult to mark cultural life outside the workplace. One of the few churches suggested is St. Joseph's Catholic Church located in a little Oklahoma coal mining town called Krebs. This Romanesque structure was the first Catholic Church constructed in Indian Territory, where it served the state's highest concentration of European immigrants, mainly Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Mexicans, who came to work in the Pittsburgh County coal mines, centers of strong United Mine Workers' (UMW) influence after 1903. St. Joseph's was built with money from working men and women who, in their desire to create impressive houses of worship, left formidable monuments to their ancestral beliefs and communal values. Churches and synagogues once seemed unrelated to labor history, but in recent years historians have assessed in new ways how both the sacred and the secular permeated the workers' world. For example, in Homestead, where the old Carnegie-U.S. Steel works was demolished, one can still visit or worship in St. Mary Magdalene Church, where the pastor supported the workers in the epic 1892 lockout, or in the Hungarian Reformed Church, where worker rallies took place.

The linkage of Protestant religious fervor with union organizing was frequent. Gutman led the way in studying the connection between evangelical religion and the labor movement, between praying and organizing, between moral instruction and workers' education. In "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement," he wrote, "Christian perfectionism offered Gilded Age labor reformers absolute values in a time of rapid change" and allowed them to use "timeless truths" in criticizing anti-worker attitudes and actions.¹⁵ The popular union leader and socialist Eugene V. Debs, whose home in Terre Haute has already achieved National Historic Landmark status, railed against organized religion, "but he used prophetic Christian imagery to resist corporate excesses." Indeed, Debs described the 1894 Pullman boycott as an expression of that "Christ-like virtue of sympathy."¹⁶

Though less formidable than the massive Catholic churches, humbler sites of working-class spiritual and social life deserve consideration. E.P. Thompson, whose epic work *The Making of the English Working Class*, deeply influenced the new labor history, wrote of these places in Britain, where the gentry ruled the countryside and corrupt corporations ruled the towns, but where working people could hold the chapels, taverns, and homes as "their own." In these "unsteeped" places of worship, "there was room for free intellectual life and democratic experiments."¹⁷ For example, the Paseo Baptist Church in Kansas City was the site of the 1937 convention of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP). That year, A. Philip Randolph's union recorded an astounding victory by forcing the Pullman Company to sign a labor agreement with an all-black union that became, according to BSCP stalwart C. L. Dellums, "the first economic agreement that was ever signed in this country by Negroes with a white institution." It was, he said, "a great inspirational thing to the entire race."¹⁸ Moreover, the 1937 agreement was of great national significance, one of the most important markers since Reconstruction of African-American independence from racist paternalism. That such an event has been recorded as part of black labor history suggests one of the lessons this theme study conveys—that sites of

¹⁵ Herbert Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement," in Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society*, 110.

¹⁶ Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs, Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 137, 65.

¹⁷ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1963), 156.

¹⁸ Quoted in Jack Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 48.

union accomplishments are also places that marked the expansion of freedom and democracy for all citizens.

A few saloons have been suggested, including Pete's Place in Krebs, Oklahoma, an establishment owned by an Italian immigrant Pietro Pegari. After being crippled in the mines, Pegari expanded his bungalow to become a restaurant that served potent Choctaw beer to miners during Prohibition. The Oklahoma Historical Society proposes the site as a monument "to the resilient and indomitable spirit of the Italian coal miners who provided the muscle and skill to develop Oklahoma's first major industry."

Even ballparks deserve consideration. Though these places might seem to be unrelated to labor history, union-management conflict in professional baseball unfolded in these very parks—first in 1885 with the formation of the National Brotherhood of Professional Ball Players and five years later when this union formed the short-lived Players' League to break the owners' monopoly.¹⁹ Like their white counterparts, owners of Negro League teams treated their players badly in the good old days of the national past time, as we see in the film "Bingo Long and his Travelling All Stars." But there were exceptions. Cumberland Posey, owner of the popular Homestead Grays of the Negro League, also owned a Pittsburgh night club where black and white steel workers gathered in 1937 to plot the advance by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee on the Jones and Laughlin (J&L) steel empire. Both employers and unions together sponsored amateur sports teams as labor unions. One J&L steelworker from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, stated that he had been threatened for quitting the company baseball team to play for the union ball club.²⁰

Workers made popular culture and sporting places their own. Many an organizing rally and strike meeting took place in ball fields and parks, like Mesaba Park in the northern Minnesota iron range, where thousands of workers, including many Finnish socialists, attended summer festivals and rallies for unions, radical organizations, and for the powerful Farmer-Labor Party. There were some occasions, such as Labor Day, 1927, when "thousands of Chicagoans assembled at Soldier's Field in Grant Park for a celebration to benefit WCFL, the Chicago Federation of Labor's 'Voice of Labor' radio station."²¹ In 1955 at the Central Park Arsenal in New York City, 3,000 municipal park workers rallied and marched on city hall to force Mayor Robert Wagner, Jr., to overrule his Parks Commissioner, the imperious Robert Moses, and to recognize District 37 of the State, County, and Municipal Employees Union. This action paved the way for public employee unionism in the city. Fields of play became more sinister sites in labor's history as in Bisbee, Arizona, where at Warren Field in 1917 armed guards assembled striking copper workers before herding them into boxcars and shipping them into the desert. The contested nature of parks and other public places, like markets, squares, and commons, is of great importance in new studies of urban space. Given the sanctity of private property, the workers'

¹⁹ Allen Guttman, *A Whole New Ball Game* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 64.

²⁰ James Green, "Democracy Comes to 'Little Siberia: Steelworkers Organize in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, 1933-1937," *Labor's Heritage*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Summer 1993), 4-27. Interview by James Green with Joe Periello, January 30, 1992, for the film "Mean Things Happening," produced by Blackside, Inc. as part of "The Great Depression," a seven-part television series.

²¹ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 137.

struggle to find and hold free spaces is central to the effort to gain equal rights and economic justice.²²

Teaching and Learning

The "self-educated worker" could be found in many shops and neighborhoods and, when employment slacked, in the reading rooms of public libraries and union halls.²³ Cooper Union in New York is a significant site in labor's intellectual history. Like many places where democratic experiments unfolded, Cooper Union combined education with agitation. Here on the Lower East Side, a young Jewish immigrant named Samuel Gompers, who would become the institutional founder of organized labor, educated himself by taking free classes in "history, biography, music, mechanics, measurement of speed, elocution, economics, electric power, geography, astronomy, and travels," while participating in the debating club. Years later, he reappeared at the same site—not as a student, but as a speaker—before a throng of young women shirtwaist-makers who called for a general strike in 1909.²⁴

Other buildings constructed by and for unions reflect a concern for learning, teaching, and cultural life. Union workers constructed labor temples in many cities and towns as free spaces to gather, hear speakers, and discuss problems. In Collinsville, Illinois, the Miners Institute Building, constructed by the United Mine Workers in 1916, included union offices as well as a public theater. In Barre, Vermont, one can still visit the Italian Socialist Labor Hall where stonecutters often met. In Katonah, New York, buildings of Brookwood Labor College survive—places where trade unionists studied with radical teachers from 1919 to 1937.

Additional sites mark the birthplaces and homes of writers, intellectuals, performers, and reformers who appealed to workers, artists like Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, and Woody Guthrie. The importance of the radical press, once read widely by working people, could be recognized in two sites connected with the lives of radical publishers Charles Kerr of Chicago and J.A. Wayland of Girard, Kansas, whose socialist periodicals reached thousands of workers in the early 1900s. Though not among the current list of suggested sites, there may be structures that housed the activities of the Workmen's Circle (Arbeiter Ring), a Jewish mutual aid and educational forum that sponsored "lectures, discussions, labor lyceums, Sunday schools and libraries." The various sites of the Women's Trade Union League's (WTUL) activities include places where female wage earners met with middle class allies and labor activists to develop themselves as articulate advocates, trained activists, and educated women. One of these sites, the League's Boston office on Boylston Place, still exists on the edge of Boston Common, not far from Faneuil Hall where the WTUL was founded at the 1903 AFL convention. This building is featured on two people's history walking tours of downtown Boston—the Women's Heritage Trail and the Working People's Heritage Trail.²⁵

²² See Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, *Free Spaces: Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986) and Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1995).

²³ See for example, Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1976), 244-55.

²⁴ Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925), 42, 30.

²⁵ Quote on the Workmen's Circle from Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 190-91. For tour guides to Boston people's history sites, see Polly Welts Kaufman, et. al., *Boston's Women's Heritage Trail* (Gloucester: The Curious

Organizing and Struggling

The motives and values that led workers into organizing are complex and interesting. For example, the strike phenomenon, central to literature and public perception of union history, has been subjected to new interpretations. Take coal mining—one of the most strike-prone industries. Miners' strikes against wage cuts and for wage increases were common objectives, but miners struck for other goals, including the need to build an industrial union that could gain recognition from a chaotic industry. This development climaxed with the founding of the United Mine Workers of America in 1890 at the Columbus, Ohio, city hall. Union miners struck to defend or exert workers' control at the pitface and to gain freedom from company domination in the coal fields, as in the case of West Virginia's Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike in which miners fought for civil liberties in a totalitarian environment. This conflict, which erupted in 1912 and resumed in 1919, centered less on wage demands and union recognition than on civil liberties—freedom of speech and assembly, freedom from the industrial feudalism of company towns, and freedom from the terrorism inflicted by the operators' hired gunmen. The struggle that began in 1912 and culminated in the 1921 armed miners' march to liberate Logan County, West Virginia, from the company rule shows that labor history is part of a larger historical theme, the struggle for liberties promised in the Bill of Rights.²⁶

RECOGNIZING THE DIVERSITY OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA

Manufacturing

The first phase of manufacturing involved artisan production in homes and small shops and is difficult to mark because few 17th and 18th century structures survive. Paul Revere's house still stands in Boston's North End, but it served as a residence not a workshop. Even visual representations of craftwork and work sites are rare from the colonial period. In the 19th century, the scarcity continued as photographers concentrated on public buildings. The photographic record of rural artisan sites is also sparse.²⁷

More antebellum sites of southern slave labor may have survived than places reflecting northern free labor. The Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia, is a site instructive about industrial slavery. Although slaves have been absent from labor history until recently, they performed much industrial and construction work in the South, which is still admired in antebellum structures and decorations like the ornamental iron work on buildings in Charleston, South Carolina. The national significance of slave labor sites is obvious, but such sites are also important to labor history. As W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out in 1935, these unfree laborers, along with the millions who toiled on the plantations, constituted a "black proletariat" that helped decide the outcome of the Civil War. The abolitionist movement and its opposition to the return

Travel Press, 1999) and James Green, *A Working People's Heritage Trail: Guide to Labor History Sites in Boston* (Malden: Union City Press, 2001).

²⁶ Jon Amsden and Stephen Brier, "Coal Miners on Strike: The Transformation of Strike Demands and the Formation of a National Union," *Journal of Inter-Disciplinary History*, VII (Spring 1977), 583-616; David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 18-22; and David A. Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 95-99, 195-96, 200.

²⁷ Thomas J. Schlereth, *Cultural History & Material Culture: Everyday Life, Landscapes, Museums* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 130.

of fugitive slaves made it, Du Bois argued, another labor movement. In an effort "to give the black worker a minimum legal status which would enable him to sell his own labor power" abolitionists tried unsuccessfully to unite with the union movement, which sought to improve the condition of free white laborers.²⁸

Though artisan sites occupied by free labor are limited, several historical sites show the development of early 19th century factory production in the Northeast. The Charles River Museum (Waltham, Massachusetts) was created at the historic site where, in 1813, the Boston Manufacturing Company built its first mill in Massachusetts. Here visitors can learn about factory work and textile workers, as well as the development of technology and the labor process. In Lynn, Massachusetts, where hand labor survived in the shoe shops until the advent of the McKay stitcher, the effects of factory machinery helped provoke the great shoe strike of 1860. A state heritage park highlights the city's vibrant democratic tradition.²⁹

Lynn's shoe strike intersected with the nation's political history. Abraham Lincoln, a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, used that strike as an occasion to discuss the meaning of freedom. Touring New England during the strike, he made a speech underlining the national significance of the walkout. "I am glad to see that a system prevails in New England under which laborers CAN strike when they want to (Cheers) . . .," said the Illinois Senator. "I like the system which lets a man quit when he wants to, and wish it might prevail everywhere," he continued to "tremendous" applause. If the South had its way, "free labor that *can* strike will give way to slave labor that cannot!"³⁰

Two additional New England sites include buildings with physical integrity that offer rare opportunities to appreciate the history of free laborers in the antebellum era. Museums at Slater's Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and at the Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts provide views of early forms of textile production: the family form (Rhode Island) and the later company-town form (large-scale industrialization in one city) in Lowell.

The exhibits at Slater's Mill and the Boott Mill in Lowell include labor in the history of technology. In the Pawtucket Museum, writes curator Robert Macieski, guides discuss the "unsettled or contested nature of industrial time and factory discipline" by describing machinery and narrating anecdotes "such as the story of that warm July day in 1792 when Slater's workers abandoned work to go whortleberry picking." Or they tell the story of when, after the 1842 strike, Pawtucket residents purchased their own clock to mount on the church belfry, "symbolizing their continued mistrust of the factory owners' time and their desire for public, as opposed to the mill owners' possession of time."³¹

²⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Athenaeum, 1962), originally published in 1935), 20-21.

²⁹ Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 73-96.

³⁰ Quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 198.

³¹ Robert Macieski, "Reading Labor into the History of Technology," in Douglas M. Reynolds and Majory Myers, eds., *Working in the Blackstone Valley: Exploring the Heritage of Industrialization* (Woonsocket: Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, 1990), 47.

The Lowell National Historical Park educates thousands of visitors every year on the experience of the early industrial revolution and the nature of the factory system. The Boott Mills Museum offers a reconstruction of a weave room filled with pounding, clattering looms. The educational staff of the Tsongas Industrial Center uses this weave room as a place to recreate the sounds and sights of industrial work for the public.³² The Center uses a historic site to conduct educational programs for school children. It is the only national park site in which labor history is presented in a fully integrated way and where a site is used for educational activities that focus on unions and workplace issues.³³

National Historic Landmarks can be venues for teaching and learning through a National Park Service-supported program of teaching aids and lesson plans, including several for work sites like the St. Anthony Falls flour mills in Minnesota.³⁴ Indeed, in several sites already designated as National Historic Landmarks, important educational work is fostered—for example by the Illinois Labor History Society's work in the Pullman Historic District and by the staff of the Botto House in Haledon, New Jersey, a key location in the 1913 Paterson silk workers strike.³⁵ Another example is the National Register's Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans such as "Building America's Industrial Revolution: The Boott Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts." For years, unions have complained that labor history has been neglected in historic sites and in school curricula. The recognition of historically significant labor history sites such as these creates opportunities to enhance public education.

Many of the great manufacturing facilities constructed during the last century have been destroyed, but some mills and plants of significance have survived, including the Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham, the Dodge main assembly plant in Detroit, and the Fulton Bag Company buildings in Atlanta. Other impressive sites are located in industrial towns adjacent to large cities like East Chicago, Illinois; Gary, Indiana; and Dearborn, Michigan; or in more isolated company-dominated, one-industry towns like Hopedale and Lawrence, Massachusetts; Bethlehem and Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Manchester, New Hampshire; Gastonia, North Carolina; and Flint, Michigan. These structures constitute the most impressive industrial constellations in the world. For example, in Lawrence, the great marching facades of the Wood Mill, largest worsted wool factory in the world, and the American Woolen Company, capped by the incongruous bell tower, still block the horizon on Interstate 93. Further up the Merrimack, the awesome Amoskeag, once the largest mill complex, curves around the river's bend in Manchester. These industrial remains are surely the most striking architectural sites in New England.³⁶ Workers made labor history in these imposing places, notably at American Woolen, where young women from Poland and Italy walked out to protest a wage cut on January 12, 1912, and then spread their wildcat strike for "bread and roses" to the Wood Company and other mills.

³² Marty Blatt, "America's Labor History: The Lowell Story," *CRM*, vol. 15, no. 5 (1992), 1, 3-5.

³³ Steve Early and Suzanne Gordon, "Long hours, low pay: Lowell mills provide students with lessons in labor history," *Boston Globe*, January 26, 1995.

³⁴ "Teaching With Historic Places," *CRM*, no. 6 (1994), 18. Address: Teaching with Historic Places, National Register of Historic Places, Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

³⁵ William Adelman, *Touring Pullman* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1977) and Marty Blatt, "Learning about Labor History: The Botto House NHL," *CRM*, no. 5 (1995), 13-14, 19.

³⁶ For an excellent study and visual survey of New England textile mills and towns see Steve Dunwell, *Run of the Mill: A Pictorial Narrative of the Expansion, Dominion, Decline and Enduring Impact of the New England Textile Industry* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1978).

Another textile manufacturing site that highlights women's work is the Fulton Bag factory in Atlanta. In an essay on the 1914 strike at this factory, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explores the career of labor organizer and strike leader O. Delight Smith. Hall writes about the role of "women, as workers, and as workers' wives" in the milieu created by AFL craft unions in hundreds of locals, central labor bodies, and ladies' auxiliaries around the country.³⁷ The Fulton Bag site suggests a number of opportunities for integrating industrial history with labor and women's history. Here the public may visit a landmark featuring factory structures and offering opportunities for learning about how paternalistic employers treated workers. The Fulton Company records at nearby Georgia Tech provide documentation through accounts of labor spies, which could be used to show how and why textile workers responded to union organizers like Delight Smith.³⁸

Some of these manufacturing sites, like the Ford River Rouge works and at least one of General Motors Chevrolet plants in Flint, are still functioning, and they still offer dramatic education sites. In this era of "jointness" and cooperation in the auto industry, the United Auto Workers could be a partner of General Motors and Ford in offering a two-dimensional view of the history that erupted in these locations.³⁹

It is easy to be awed by the size and complexity of industrial architecture and by the power of machinery, but what may be learned about labor history at these sites of technological wonder? Most industrial sites recognize entrepreneurship and engineering genius, marketing skill, and architectural achievement, but only in rare cases accord recognition to human labor. However, many extant factory structures create settings in which the public can appreciate the human element in the industrial equation.

The Flint General Motors and Ford Dearborn locations mark events of great national significance and offer important lessons for the public. The 1937 sit-down strikes at the first site represented organized labor's most important tactical breakthrough in seeking recognition from giant corporations. The Flint plant represents an important marker in the long search for workers' power that began after the Civil War. Many developments of national significance took place at Ford's Rouge complex in Dearborn. The 1941 siege by the United Auto Workers was critical because it forced Henry Ford to sign an agreement with his own workers. Of the many strikes in the era of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), this confrontation might have been the most significant because of Ford's importance. He was the father of mass production and of modern industrial control exercised through a remarkable mix of authoritarianism and paternalism described in the 1993 Blackside film documentary, "A Job at Ford's."⁴⁰ The 1941 Ford strike marked the decisive influence of the federal government in allowing industrial unions to leverage corporations. It joined a younger generation of black civil rights leaders with union

³⁷ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "O. Delight Smith's Progressive Era: Labor, Feminism and Reform in the Urban South," in Nancy A. Hewitt and Susan Leacock, *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 166-67.

³⁸ Robert C. McMath, Jr., "History by a Graveyard: The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill Records," *Labor's Heritage*, vol. 4 (April 1989), 5-9.

³⁹ For several years before the National Park took shape in Lowell, this author traveled with my labor history students to the city to walk through the Wanalancit Mill, the last operating factory in the city. It was very instructive for the students to experience the hot, humid temperature, the air filled with the dust and the smell of machine oil, the relentless looms shooting shuttles back and forth, and the deafening sound of machinery.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the way photos of the Rouge site can be used to dramatize historic events in labor history see Green, *Taking History to Heart*, 174-180.

activists, and allowed workers to declare independence from corporate control and to redefine Americanism in more democratic ways. Ford's anti-Semitism and sympathy for Nazism, acceptable in the early 1930s, seemed un-American by 1941. Once a fearsome workplace, a cauldron of ethnic, racial and religious antipathy, the Rouge became something else after 1941—the site of the world's largest union, Ford UAW local 600 with thousands of members who called each other brother and sister.⁴¹

Unfortunately, the sites of other significant events in the CIO era no longer contain industrial facilities. In Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, where the imposing Jones and Laughlin (J&L) mill stretched for four miles along the Ohio River, little remains on the site where the company fired ten steel workers for union activity in 1934. These particular terminations, common at the time, led to an event of national significance: the Supreme Court's 1937 decision to uphold the Wagner Act. This decision sustained an earlier ruling of the National Labor Relations Board against the J&L Company that had ordered the rehiring of the 10 Aliquippa union workers. The 5-4 decision affirmed the constitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act, which seemed impossible when it was passed in 1935. So in Aliquippa, in the heart of what had been called "Little Siberia," legal and political developments of national significance took place on the labor history's stage.⁴² Although the J&L mill is gone, further investigation may reveal remains to mark the historic events that took place there. Few events in labor history are more significant than the passage, testing, and judicial sustenance of the National Labor Relations Act.

The recent history of de-industrialization, which affected cities like Aliquippa, creates moral and political issues for preservationists and for this study. In William Serrin's book, *Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of a Steel Town*, he writes that in the once-proud steel town's decline, it had become "chic"—the subject of attention by study groups and committees, historical surveys, oral history projects, redevelopment planners, and preservationists. The National Park Service and the Department of the Interior studied the historical significance of the Homestead mill complex and other plants in the Monogahela Valley.⁴³ Plans were made for a museum and park on the site once occupied by the large mill. "The site of the old Homestead Works was, by the summer of 1993, cleared of most of its old buildings, the buildings that, stretching several miles along the Monogahela River, had been the center of the American iron and steel industry—of American industry itself . . ." Reflecting the bitterness of Homesteaders, Serrin observes, "When the Homestead Works was operating and Homestead was a dirty steel town, people from the outside paid no attention to it."⁴⁴

In communities like this one, the landmark nomination process involves more than recognizing historically or architecturally significant sites as communities search for new economic engines.

⁴¹ James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980), 155-67, 178.

⁴² Green, "Democracy Comes to 'Little Siberia,'" 9-10.

⁴³ From 1989-1993, the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) program inventoried and documented steel resources associated with steel mills of the Monogahela Valley. In 1993 the National Park Service teamed with the Western Pennsylvania Partnerships Branch to develop six alternative site plans for management and use of the Homestead and Carrie Furnace sites. Also in 1993, the National Park Service assisted in developing the Steel Industry Heritage Concept Plan covering six counties in southwestern Pennsylvania to address the means of inventorying, preserving and interpreting the area's steel resources.

⁴⁴ William Serrin, *Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 404, 416, 406.

As historian Michael Wallace suggests, presentations should "overcome the tendency many Americans have of seeing the past as something that is over and done with, and of merely nostalgic, academic or entertainment value." Indeed, he adds, "the very creation of an industrial museum is often a response by a community to the collapse of its manufacturing base." This can be a contentious response since economic developers who want to generate new jobs in tourism or high tech often offend those in working-class communities that have invested so much in the old industries. These tendencies produced anger in the Homesteaders Serrin interviewed, people who were struggling for their town's economic survival against those who were providing a fitting burial. Wallace argues that exhibits can go beyond presenting factories as they were and ask what happened to the investments, innovations, and commitments that might have kept them in place.⁴⁵

For example, in New Bedford, Massachusetts, site of a general strike of textile workers in 1928, Spinner Publications produced an illustrated history that raises questions about what went wrong with the economy and what responsibility mill owners and managers could be assigned for the textile industry's decline.⁴⁶ Several extant New Bedford mills, struck in 1928, could be landmarks that would raise questions broader than the wage cut that caused the walkout, questions the unions themselves have raised about mismanagement and disinvestment. Such an approach reflects labor historians' renewed focus on the role of the state in industrial affairs and increasing interest in wage earners as citizens.⁴⁷ Such an approach could also be used to address several questions raised by Wallace about industrial history museums, such as the following: "How did the struggle over social welfare and labor reform affect workplace matters? Where did working-class voters stand on issues of . . . capital mobility . . . and the battles over the banking system? Most broadly, what difference did the possession of political liberty and the exercise of political power make to the people whose lives" the museums have taken to chronicling?⁴⁸

Regional Bias

The physical and economic dominance of manufacturing in our national experience could lead to a bias in the selection process. An exaggerated focus on factory sites could also create a regional tilt towards the Northeast and Middle West. These biases would minimize the excellent scholarship on workers who did not labor in factories and mills. Great events in labor history took place in and around large industrial plants, especially in the 1930s, but many important events took place elsewhere. Indeed, most union organizing has focused on employers in cities and in smaller communities not dominated by huge corporations.

In Massachusetts, for instance, labor history is well accented in Lowell at the Boott Mills and at the Patrick Mogan Center and in Lawrence at State Heritage Park and in a Bread and Roses Festival that has taken place each Labor Day since 1978. Yet, workers in these two large textile manufacturing towns found it difficult to unionize. Unlike Lynn and Fall River (cities with a diverse and competitive melange of the textile manufacturing firms), Lowell and Lawrence were

⁴⁵ Mike Wallace, "Industrial Museums and the History of Deindustrialization," *The Public Historian*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Winter 1987), 10.

⁴⁶ James Green, introduction to *The Strike of '28*, by Daniel Georgianna with Roberta Hazen Aaronson (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, 1993).

⁴⁷ See for example David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴⁸ Wallace, "Industrial Museums," 12.

never strong union towns. During the 1890s, when unions scarcely existed in Lawrence and Lowell, labor organizing centered in Boston where the building trades, transit and dock workers, printers, machinists, and teamsters could pressure small employers and mobilize political and community support.⁴⁹

It may be difficult to mark varied urban manufacturing sites which draw attention to the "metropolitan path to industrialization" described. Many industrial-residential areas of the old walking cities have been razed in the process of urban renewal and de-industrialization. One such district can still be seen in limited form in the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago, where some industrial structures survived the great fire. The historic house museums of Chicago's merchant elites stand out along Prairie Avenue on the South Side, but sites of the violent 1877 confrontation between railroad workers and police remain unmarked.⁵⁰ So do the sites of the same conflict in Baltimore's Camden Yards, now occupied by the Orioles' ballpark. Not far away, near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, a neighborhood of extant railway worker housing remains unmarked. In contrast, the splendid Evergreen House, built for the B&O's president, can be seen by the public as a "monument to the wealth and power enjoyed by members of Baltimore's wealthy upper class in the nineteenth century."⁵¹

Minority Recognition

Sites associated with ethnic, racial, religious, and gender differences should be considered for marking. These aspects have received scrutiny in the new labor history. Sites associated with minority recognition have attracted less attention from labor and social historians, whose interest has often centered on specific industrial sites. Transportation firms, retail and commercial establishments, and the service sector may represent these aspects of labor history.

Some of the urban transportation sites suggested offer interesting possibilities in this regard. For example, in Boston, at the Back Bay Station, which now serves both Amtrak trains and metropolitan transit, the work of the city's black porters and dining car waiters is commemorated by an impressive statue of A. Philip Randolph and six permanent panels filled with photos and oral history quotations that publicize the African-American railroad employees who worked out of the station and lived in the nearby community. The Back Bay Station display marks a historically significant urban work site with an integrated presentation of labor and black history.⁵²

Racism segregated work and workers in irrational ways. There were moments, notably on the New Orleans docks, when white and black workers found a rationale for solidarity and practiced it, such as the general strike of 1892, which the transportation essay describes. The essay also shows the exceptional character of interracial solidarity in transportation. Pervasive segregation

⁴⁹ See James R. Green and Hugh Carter Donahue, *Boston's Workers: A Labor History* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1979).

⁵⁰ William Adleman, *Pilsen and Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1984).

⁵¹ Sylvia Gillett, "Camden Yards and the Strike of 1877," and Elizabeth Fee, "Evergreen House and the Garrett Family: A Railroad Fortune," in Elizabeth Fee, et. al., eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1991), 1-31. Quote, 17.

⁵² See James R. Green and Robert C. Hayden, "A. Philip Randolph and Boston's African American Railroad Worker," *Trotter Institute Review* (Fall 1992), 20-23, available from William Monroe Trotter Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston.

ruled the industry, especially the railroads, constructed by segregated gangs and operated by segregated work crews. Blacks were restricted mainly to jobs as firemen and brakemen or as cooks, porters, and waiters on passenger trains. The achievements of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Dining Car Waiters Union, represented in the display at Boston's Back Bay Station, are those of workers who turned railroad job segregation into a basis for organizing the most powerful organization of poor blacks in the U.S. after the fall of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.⁵³

Extractive Industry

There is no way to quantify labor history, but more union activity probably occurred in the extractive industries than in the manufacturing industries. The level of conflict and the corresponding loss of life in the American mining industry are of national significance. These sites are more difficult to mark than manufacturing sites because of the transient nature of extractive industries and fragility of the environments they created. But there are "ghost towns," and there are bodies buried nearby—the remains of thousands who did not die of natural causes. For example, one suggestion for consideration is the site of the 1897 Lattimer massacre, where organized labor memorializes the 19 Polish, Slovakian, and Lithuanian coal miners killed by sheriff's deputies. This site represents more than bloody ground of bitter conflict; it draws public attention to a place where striking immigrant miners presented their papers as naturalized citizens to the sheriff, trusting their new and highly-prized citizenship would protect them.⁵⁴

The Lattimer massacre "is one of a number of well-known episodes in American history in which law enforcement officials overreacted pathologically to reasonably peaceful labor protest."⁵⁵ At sites like this, the public can consider a disturbing fact: American workers who loved their democratic government often became the victims of brutal state repression. At Ludlow, Colorado, one can view the pit where the women and children were suffocated after National Guard troops burned their tent colony in the violent 1914 Colorado civil war. A monument, erected by the United Mine Workers of America, mourns the death of these innocents, the civilian casualties of industrial wars. Their deaths account for the national significance of the Ludlow massacre, the horror of which "jolted America." The U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations concluded in 1915 that workers "shared an almost universal conviction that they, both as individuals and as a class, are denied justice," that employers had used law enforcement in a "bitterly partisan" manner, and that the denial of workers' rights had caused industrial violence.⁵⁶

Mine labor conflicts often elicited a community response and called on female leaders, like Mary Septek, who mobilized women after the Lattimer massacre.⁵⁷ The communal response to injustice is evident as a labor history theme in the bloody hills and hollows of West Virginia's coal country. The violent events that took place there have already been mentioned—the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike, the battle of Matewan in 1920, and then the epic Miners' March to free Logan County from the coal companies' gunmen and the Battle of Blair Mountain that ensued.

⁵³ Green and Hayden, "A. Philip Randolph and Boston's African American Railroad Worker," 21.

⁵⁴ Victor Green, *The Slavic Community on Strike* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 130-44.

⁵⁵ Perry K. Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in the Anthracite Coal Industry, 1876-1925* (Albany State University of New York Press, 1994), 55.

⁵⁶ Graham Adams, Jr., *The Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915: The Activities and Findings of the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 217-219.

⁵⁷ Green, *The Slavic Community on Strike*, 133-44.

Cecil Roberts, the current President of the United Mine Workers of America, whose great-uncle led the Miners' March in 1921, testified before Congress on the need to save Blair Mountain from strip mining so that it could be a future national park. But it was more than that, Roberts argued, as he learned by listening to his grandmother talk about labor activist Mother Jones and his great uncle talk about the armed march of 1921. He "learned early on that if you look at the battle of Blair Mountain as one event then you miss its significance much as you would if you examined the Battle of Gettysburg without considering its role in the Civil War as a whole." In their march to liberate Logan County from the mine operators' hired guns, West Virginians acted not as seditious rioters but as "patriots" redeeming their state from the rule of terror.⁵⁸ Roberts admitted that labor history is a "highly political" subject and that its violent character makes it controversial.⁵⁹

Memorials and Commemoration

The reality of violent conflict is represented by a well-known labor history site—Haymarket Square (Chicago), the scene of the 1886 bombing and riot in which seven police and at least 40 -- protestors died. Later anarchists were convicted of the bombing and executed in spite of widespread protests. Conflicts erupted over the marking of the Haymarket site and the memorializing of two radically different groups of casualties—police and anarchists. In William Adelman's guide to the area for the Illinois Labor History Society, he describes the tempestuous history of Haymarket Square. A statue to honor the dead police was dedicated on Memorial Day 1889. Then, in 1903, part of the inscription was stolen, and later a streetcar operator ran his train off the track and knocked the statuary policeman off its base. The reckless motorman said he was tired of seeing that policeman with his arm raised in the air. After being moved to a different location twice, the statute was bombed in 1968 and again in 1970 by protestors who, like the anarchists of 1886, had problems with the Chicago police. Finally, the statue was moved far off site to the lobby of Police Headquarters.⁶⁰

Perhaps such "interpretations of conflict . . . may provoke further conflict," if not Chicago-style violence. But, as Thomas Schlereth argues, those who have taken on the task of presenting difficult themes have often been rewarded with positive response from members of the public who appreciate "candor and courage" in remembering disturbing or even disgusting events.⁶¹

Memorials in places like Walheim Cemetery reflect the 19th century iconography of labor symbolized by a male figure. This male imagery carried through into the 20th century and is well represented in public art sponsored by the New Deal. "Treatments of labor were steeped in ideologies of manhood," writes Barbara Melosh. Depictions of wage labor "consistently

⁵⁸ Cecil Roberts testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Mining and Natural Resources, February 21, 1991. Quoted in Green, *Taking History to Heart*, 147-165, which includes a fuller examination of sites of conflict in the South.

⁵⁹ For a fascinating study on the marking of military battlefields and the conflicts aroused in doing so, see Edward T. Lillenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

⁶⁰ William Adelman, *Haymarket Revisited* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1976, second edition), 39-40. This little booklet is a model of what can be done to educate the public about labor history sites. For a consideration of why the events at Haymarket remained such an important focus of working class memory for so long, see Green, *Taking History to Heart*, 121-146.

⁶¹ Schlereth, "Causing Conflict, Doing Violence," in *Cultural History and Material Culture*, 369.

excluded . . . women's productive work" emphasizing instead female dependency on the "manly worker."⁶²

These public art projects rarely presented controversial images of male workers as martyrs and victims. The exception can be seen in two WPA mural scenes in the old Rincon Square Post Office on San Francisco's Embarcadero. These scenes depict the stories of Mooney and Billings, labor radicals jailed for allegedly bombing a 1916 military preparedness parade, along with the images of the workers killed in the 1934 general strike on the nearby docks. Occasionally, women were represented within this heroic theme in labor martyrdom—for example, in the Ludlow massacre monument and the memorial to organizer Fannie Sellins, murdered in Pennsylvania during the 1919 steel strike. Mother Jones's monument rests near the remains of martyred Virden miners. But for the most part, women are excluded from labor's heroic iconography as represented in monuments and other art forms. As Elizabeth Faue explains, this exclusion reflects a kind of historical amnesia about the role of women in the community-based organizing campaigns that often preceded formal union recognition.⁶³

Of all the sites organized labor has identified, there is an absence of places associated with tasks that occupied most women, such as teaching, clerical, and retail work. An exceptional case is that of public school teachers, who began organizing early in the 1900s. Teacher unionism is remarkable because, unlike other occupations in which women constituted a majority, these unions often chose women as leaders.

In sum, this study emphasizes both the diversity of the working class experience in America and the multi-cultural dimensions of labor history scholarship as it has developed during the past three decades. This diversity is based on the particular experiences of ethnicity, race, region, religion, nationality, and gender, as well as the experiences of collective work and struggle.

The dominant themes in the history of American labor represent a bygone era. Fewer Americans have any direct connection to the stories that figure prominently in the writings of labor historians: organized labor, strikes and protest, and negotiations for better wages and working conditions. With the transformation of the U.S. economy from manufacturing to service-sector in the second half of the 20th century, the period in which blue-collar labor peaked now lies beyond the nation's collective memory. In the late 1940s, nearly half of the American workforce was employed in blue-collar jobs. By 2000, that figure had declined to 29 percent.⁶⁴ In many settings, the experience of work today is fundamentally different than it was only a few decades ago. Explaining challenges and struggles faced by the labor movement and its success in securing better conditions for all workers promises to bring recognition to the accomplishments of American labor.

⁶² Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 83.

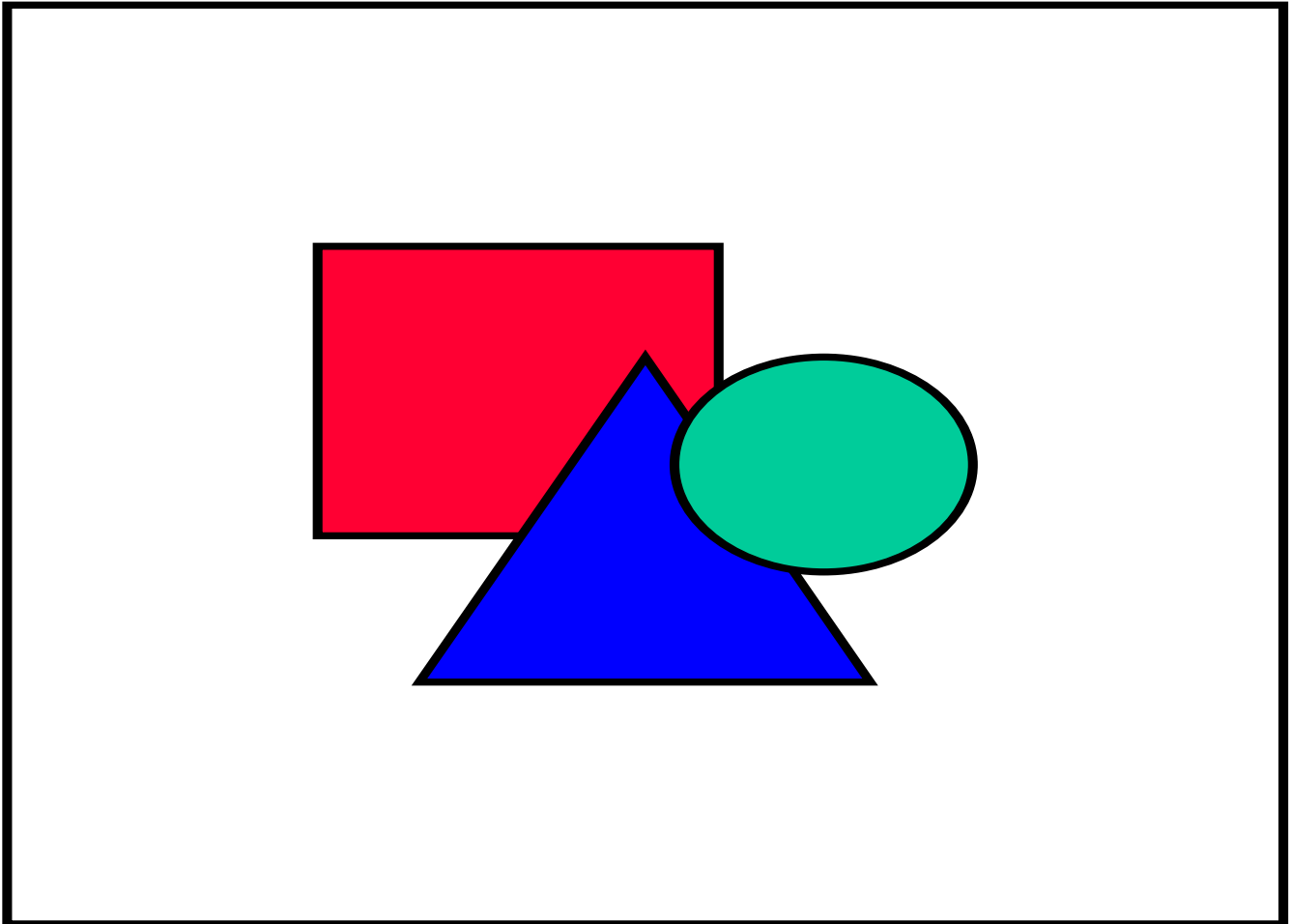
⁶³ Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 73-78.

⁶⁴ "Occupational Employment and Wages, 2002," U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.nr0.htm>). This paragraph contributed by Dan Vivian, National Park Service.

Labor's epic story, told in all its diversity, highlights important themes in national development. Together, the suggested sites emphasize the centrality of work in the lives of the majority of American people throughout history, slave and free, male and female, native and foreign born. These sites may help the public understand how important working people have been to the nation's physical and economic development.

Organized labor's struggle for economic welfare and human dignity included benefits for all Americans: the eight-hour day, the free weekend, the end of child labor, unemployment and old age insurance, occupational health and safety and more. Marking labor history on the national landscape will help Americans understand labor's struggle for economic freedom, social security, development of civic freedom, and representative democracy. These historical sites show how the workers' search for power, and the union movement's struggle for recognition, advanced a crusade to protect civil rights and liberties and to expand democracy. In at least two ways—economic and civic—labor history really is American history.

EXTRACTIVE LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES



Guarding Emmett Mine, Leadville, Lake County, Colorado, during mining labor disputes, a man wears a blanket, pistol, holster, and ammunition belt. He holds a drop-block carbine rifle with bayonet; mine processing buildings and tailing piles are in the background.

Photograph courtesy of Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library

EXTRACTIVE LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES⁶⁵

Life comes to the miners out of their deaths, and death out of their lives.

—Mother Jones, 1925

The public is sorry for the victims, and people on the street say, "Oh, isn't it too bad!" And it ends there, and nothing is done, and the widows wait, and the orphans grow up in poverty and in ignorance and in deprivation of opportunity, because someone found it cheaper to kill their fathers than to protect them, and the public was too busy with its own affairs to care very long, or to do anything about it.

—John L. Lewis, 1947⁶⁶

Extractive enterprise played a critical role in the economic development of the U.S. throughout the long period of industrialization that began in the early 19th century. Coal, and then petroleum, fueled the Industrial Revolution. Iron, copper, timber, and other natural resources served as indispensable raw materials for manufacturing, transportation, construction, and other sectors of the economy.

For decades, both popular and scholarly historical accounts concentrated attention on the small cohort of entrepreneurs who founded and led major corporations in the extractive industries. Conversely, historians took little notice of the millions of individuals who worked in this sector from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century.⁶⁷ Extractive employees were integrated into the story of growth primarily through analysis of the establishment and development of national unions. This institutional approach gave labor a place in the saga of national progress and acknowledged the struggle to win a more equitable distribution of the enormous wealth created in this sector of the economy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Alan Derickson, Professor of Labor Studies and History at Pennsylvania State University, prepared this context. Dr. Derickson specializes in the history of American labor, history of health policy, and occupational health. His books are *Black Lung: Anatomy of a Public Health Disaster* (Cornell University Press, 1998) and *Workers' Health, Workers' Democracy: The Western Miners' Struggle, 1891-1925* (Cornell University Press, 1988), which won the Philip Taft Labor History Award for best book of the year in the field.

⁶⁶ Mary Harris Jones, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, 3d ed. [1st ed., 1925] (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 1976), 200; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Welfare, *Welfare of Miners: Hearings*, 80th Cong., 1st sess., April 3, 1947 (Washington: GPO, 1947), 607.

⁶⁷ A. B. Parsons, ed., *Seventy-Five Years of Progress in the Mineral Industry, 1871-1946* (NY: American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, 1947); Alfred D. Chandler, "Anthracite Coal and the Beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in the United States," *Business History Review*, 46 (1972), 141-81; Rodman W. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1963); Edwin P. Hoyt, Jr., *The Guggenheims and the American Dream* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1967); Carl C. Rister, *Oil! Titan of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949); J. Stanley Clark, *The Oil Century: From the Drake Well to the Conservation Era* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958); Kendall Beaton, *Enterprise in Oil: A History of Shell in the United States* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957); Ralph W. Hidy, Frank E. Hill, and Allan Nevins, *Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1963); Howard N. Eavenson, *The First Century and a Quarter of American Coal Industry* (Pittsburgh: N. pub., 1942). Employment in the extractive sector went from approximately 30,000 in 1840 to a peak of approximately 1,300,000 80 years later. By 1940, employment had fallen to slightly under 1,000,000. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, 2 vols. (Washington: GPO, 1975), 1: 137, 139; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings United States, 1909-78*, Bulletin 1312-11 (Washington: GPO, 1979), 65.

⁶⁸ McAlister Coleman, *Men and Coal* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943); Vernon H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); idem, *Nonferrous Metals Industry Unionism, 1932-1954: A Story of Leadership Controversy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954); idem, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945); Harvey O'Connor, *History of Oil Workers International Union (CIO)* (Denver: Oil Workers Int'l Union (CIO), 1950).

Yet union-centered studies confined workers to the role of "economic men," self-interested agents who sought only a higher price for services. With the rise of the new labor history in the past quarter century, however, this confinement ended. Historians have examined diverse aspects of the social, cultural, and political lives of miners, loggers, and other extractive workers. As a result, these workers have emerged as members of families and ethnic groups, creators of communities, inheritors and transmitters of cultural traditions, and active participants in politics and civic affairs.

Recasting the history of extractive labor in humanistic rather than economic terms highlights manifold evidence of the carnage wrought in producing minerals and timber. Toiling in dangerous jobs, extractive workers suffered a high toll in death and disability from occupational injuries and illnesses. For example, in 1910 the typical hardrock miner in the U.S. was 16 times more likely to be killed by a traumatic injury on the job than was the typical manufacturing employee.⁶⁹ Historians have illuminated extractive workers' efforts to prevent victimization by occupational hazards to health and safety. Because no other type of work compares to extraction in terms of adverse working conditions, this sector affords a unique view of the tremendous human cost of U.S. industrialization.

In addition, recent scholarship has reconsidered extractive laborers as economic actors, beginning at the point of production. Clearly, an enduring contest over control of the extraction process pervaded this country's mines, oilfields, and timberlands. Engrained habits of craft autonomy and even outright workers' control of production clashed with assertions of managerial prerogative. Indeed, the bitterness of this struggle for control of the workplace does much to explain the strain of militant unionism characteristic of extraction.

PRE-INDUSTRIAL ERA & SELF-SUFFICIENCY UNTIL 1840

In the pre-industrial era, much extractive work involved skill, both physical and mental. Mining required constant decision-making. Before there were engineers to locate mineral deposits and to guide the exploitation plans, ordinary men performed exploratory tasks and devised plans for extracting resources. Veterans of the Cornish tin mines immigrated to the U.S. throughout the 19th century to prospect for metalliferous ores and to oversee the pursuit of prospects underground. Coal diggers from Wales, Scotland, and England took similar initiatives in the bituminous and anthracite fields. Experienced petroleum workers from Pennsylvania assumed a leading role in identifying and tunneling to reach western oil deposits. These workers held the strategic power to decide where and even whether to commence operations.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Industrial Accident Statistics*, by Frederick L. Hoffman, Bulletin 157 (Washington: GPO, 1915), 6.

⁷⁰ John Rowe, *The Hard-Rock Men: Cornish Immigrants and the North American Mining Frontier* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1974); Arthur C. Todd, *The Cornish Miner in America* (Truro, Eng.: D. Bradford Barton, 1967); John H. M. Laslett, *Nature's Noblemen: The Fortunes of the Independent Collier in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1855-1899* (Los Angeles: UCLA, Institute of Industrial Relations, 1983); Herbert G. Gutman, "Labor in the Land of Lincoln: Coal Miners on the Prairie," in Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, ed. Ira Berlin (New York: New Press, 1987), 117-212; Nancy L. Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats and Proletarians: Work, Class, and Politics in the California Oil Industry, 1917-1925" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1994), 68-70. On the exceptional lack of freedom in southern timber and turpentine extraction, see Jerrell H. Shofner, "Forced Labor in the Florida Forests, 1880-1950," *Journal of Forest History* 25 (1981), 14-25.

Once laborers selected a work site, they made judgments about how to proceed. Miners and loggers toiled at their own pace. They chose which tools to use and how to use them. Coal workers used hand tools—auger drills and picks—and blasting powder to bring down masses of coal. Hardrock workers likewise manipulated simple hand tools and explosive material to extract minerals. Lumberjacks decided at what height to take down a tree, which saws and axes to deploy, and in what direction the tree should fall. The builders of oil and gas rigs were similarly responsible for conceiving and realizing the rigs' particular shape and size. These decisions were never routine because environmental conditions varied. Extractive workers met one of the fundamental criteria for craft status: they regularly encountered unique situations that called for creative adaptation.⁷¹

Extractive workers found other outlets for creative initiative. Some devised new tools or refined existing designs. Oil workers, for example, came up with improved connections between the drill pipe and the drill collar. The pre-industrial repertoire encompassed various maintenance functions. Miners spent a significant amount of time securing the roof of the underground cavity in which they labored. Roof maintenance included pulling down loose chunks of rock and propping the roof with timbers. Many workers sharpened and maintained saws, picks, and other tools.⁷²

In maintenance tasks and in other ways, extractive workers displayed more than self-regard. Habits and ideals of mutual responsibility guided the behavior of workers at almost every turn. As a young coal loader, future unionist John Brophy learned the unequivocal demands for vigilance: "Loyalty to his fellow workers required a very alert awareness of danger every minute that he spent in the mine. Careless or selfish actions that endangered lives were unthinkable, and any miner who broke the safety rules was quickly made aware of the other men's disapproval." In this strictly sex-segregated sphere, such reciprocity fostered a deeply gendered solidarity. Malcolm Ross captured this solidarity as "a brotherhood among miners knit by an unspoken pact against the rock."⁷³

⁷¹ Otis E. Young, Jr., *Black Powder and Hand Steel: Miners and Machines on the Old Western Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), passim, esp. 30-40; idem, *Western Mining* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 178-91; Frank A. Crampton, *Deep Enough: A Working Stiff in the Western Mine Camps* (1956; rpt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 22-25; Carter Goodrich, *The Miners' Freedom: A Study of the Working Life in a Changing Industry* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1925), 15-100; Keith Dix, *Work Relations in the Coal Industry: The Hand-Loading Era, 1880-1930* (Morgantown: West Virginia University, Institute for Labor Studies, 1977), 1-16, 29-38, 42; Donald L. Miller and Richard E. Sharpless, *The Kingdom of Coal: Work, Enterprise and Ethnic Communities in the Mine Fields* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 84-98; Perry K. Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in the Anthracite Coal Industry 1875-1925* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 12-14; Daniel A. Cornford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 20-22; Richard W. Judd, *Aroostook: A Century of Logging in Northern Maine* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1989), 115-21; Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats and Proletarians," 25-29.

⁷² Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats and Proletarians," 15, 40-41, 31-32; Judd, *Aroostook*, 116; Dix, *Work Relations*, 74, 77, 101-2; John Brophy, *A Miner's Life*, ed. John O. P. Hall (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 37, 45; Alan Derickson, *Workers' Health, Workers' Democracy: The Western Miners' Struggle, 1891-1925* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 6, 58-59.

⁷³ Brophy, *Miner's Life*, 41 (quotation), 36-50; Malcolm Ross, *Death of a Yale Man* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939), 31 (quotation); Dix, *Work Relations*, 12, 16; Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 59-61; George M. Blackburn and Sherman L. Ricards, "Unequal Opportunity on a Mining Frontier: The Role of Gender, Race, and Birthplace," *Pacific Historical Review* 62 (1993), 19-38; Gunther Peck, "Manly Gambles: The Politics of Risk on the Comstock Lode, 1860-1880," *Journal of Social History* 26 (1993), 701-23. On manliness toward one's co-workers, see David

INDUSTRIAL ADVANCES AND OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS, 1840-1945

Industrialization in extraction advanced haltingly in the century after 1840. As in other sectors of the economy, the biggest force was the steam engine. In coal mining, the late 19th century watched steam-powered machinery undercut the working face to yield a larger and more controlled fall of coal. In hardrock mining and stone quarrying, the decades after 1870 saw the dissemination of steam drills for boring the holes into which explosive charges were placed. In oil and gas exploration, steam engines drove the drill bit into the ground. In logging, the sequence of industrialization was reversed. The central extractive task of felling trees long remained a manual job; on the other hand, haulage of felled trees using cables attached to a stationary engine, the so-called donkey engine, came into common usage around the turn of the century.

Mechanization and the application of inanimate sources of power extended to additional operations. In mining, after many failed experiments, the mechanical loading of coal and other minerals yielded to engineering skill in the years after 1920. In the bituminous (soft coal) segment of the coal industry, the crucial breakthrough was the Joy loader, which displaced countless thousands of shoveling laborers. Similarly, locomotives moved an increasing share of the material thus loaded. In timber tracts, efficient (i.e., portable, lightweight, and durable) chainsaws came into widespread use in the 1940s.

These innovations had an impact on employees. Under some circumstances, the new tools and methods alleviated physical burdens that exhausted or disabled laborers. In other cases, technological advances caused bottlenecks that intensified work. In hardrock mining, for instance, the implementation of power drilling expedited the ore blasting, but the persistence of manual methods of loading broken ore meant that muckers had to work harder to keep pace. Moreover, mechanization in this period was incomplete, especially in smaller firms. So extractive work, for the most part, remained hard work.⁷⁴

It also continued to be dangerous work. Over the course of industrialization, the general tendency for occupational risks of injury and illness increased. Powerful, unfamiliar tools often did bodily damage to workers. With the advent of steam-powered overhead cable systems of conveyance, for example, the log transportation through and over the work site increased mishaps. Technological experimentation came at the expense of employees' lives and limbs.⁷⁵

Montgomery, "Workers' Control of Machine Production in the 19th Century," in Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9-31, esp. 14-15.

⁷⁴ Parsons, *Seventy-Five Years of Progress*, 40-400; Mark Wyman, *Hard-Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), passim, esp. 84-117; Young, *Western Mining*, 204-17; Arrell M. Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza: The Tri-State District of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 67-90; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *St. Clair: A 19th-Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 30-53; Dix, *Work Relations*, 15ff; Keith Dix, *What's a Coal Miner to Do?: The Mechanization of Coal Mining* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988); Goodrich, *Miner's Freedom*, 103-82; Andrew M. Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!: Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 59-86; Ellis Lucia, "A Lesson from Nature: Joe Cox and His Revolutionary Saw Chain," *Journal of Forest History* 25 (1981), 158-65; Quam-Wickham, "Petroleumocrats and Proletarians," 33ff; Lynch, *Roughnecks, Drillers*, passim; Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 27ff.

⁷⁵ Wyman, *Hard-Rock Epic*, 84-117; Dix, *Work Relations*, 6-71; Whiteside, *Regulating Danger*, 46; Prouty, *More*

The concomitant growth in the scale of operations meant greater hazards. Deeper mine shafts guaranteed death in the event of a fall or broken hoisting cable. Explosions and fires in larger mines claimed a larger number of victims. The first major catastrophe in coal occurred at the Steuben Shaft in Avondale, Pennsylvania, on September 6, 1869, when a fire trapped anthracite (hard coal) workers 300 feet underground in a mine with only one exit. Altogether, 110 perished including two rescue workers. Between 1870 and 1914, 37 coal mine disasters each killed 50 or more workers. In the worst of these, 361 died in the explosion at Monongah Mines 6 and 8 in Fairmont, West Virginia, on December 6, 1907. In metal mining, the biggest disaster fell on June 8, 1917, when a fire in the Speculator Mine in Butte, Montana, killed 163 workers.⁷⁶

After 1920, the risk of occupational injury lessened. Enactment of workers' compensation legislation fostered the Safety First campaign, which managers of extractive enterprises embraced. Hardhats, safety goggles, steel-toed shoes, and other personal protective gear became commonplace. Gears, belts, pulleys, and other dangerous moving parts of extractive equipment were enclosed in sheetmetal or isolated by guardrails. With the assistance of the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the more sizable mining and petroleum companies mounted educational programs, some quite elaborate. As a result, occupational injury rates declined.

Nonetheless, considering the century of industrialization as a whole, the aggregate toll from traumatic injuries was enormous. Unfortunately, the data, especially for the 19th century and especially for nonfatal injuries, are incomplete. Many states collected no data on this phenomenon for decades; other states maintained statistical records that suffered from systemic underreporting, due to dependence on self-reporting by employers or the observations of overworked inspectors. Despite these limitations, government sources recorded more than 120,000 deaths from injury in mining, quarrying, and related mineral work for the interval 1870-1945. No similar national data set exists for timber, petroleum, and turpentine extraction. However, flawed state-level data offers a glimpse of the carnage in logging. During the period 1911-1945, more than 100 loggers per year died of workplace injuries in Washington.⁷⁷

WORK-INDUCED ILLNESS

The problem of work-induced illnesses proved less tractable. In the pre-industrial era, occupational disease appears to have been infrequent. But technological changes across the mining industries led to elevated concentrations of hazardous dust. Power drills and cutting

Deadly Than War, 87ff; William G. Robbins, "Labor in the Pacific Slope Timber Industry: A 20th-Century Perspective," *Journal of the West* 25 (April 1986), 9-10, 12; Quam-Wickham, "Petroleumcrats and Proletarians," 43.

⁷⁶ Wallace, *St. Clair*, 296-302; William Graebner, *Coal-Mining Safety in the Progressive Period: The Political Economy of Reform* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 1-15; U.S. Bureau of Mines, *Coal Mine Fatalities in the United States, 1915*, by Albert H. Far (Washington: GPO, 1916), 39; James Whiteside, *Regulating Danger: The Struggle for Mine Safety in the Rocky Mountain Coal Industry* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), passim, esp. 73-77; Philip A. Kalisch, "The Wobegone Miners of Wyoming, 42 (1970), 237-42; idem, "Ordeal of the Oklahoma Coal Miners: Coal Mine Disasters in the Sooner State, 1886-1945," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 48 (1970), 331-40; Noel Milan, "The Day 200 Miners Died 81 Years Ago," *Mine Safety and Health*, 11 (1969), 27-30; Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 34; Tom Janisse et al., "The Argonaut Mine Disaster," *Volcano Review* 3 (1981), 9-102.

⁷⁷ Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 1: 607; U.S., Mine Safety and Health Administration, *Summary of Selected Injury Experience and Worktime for the Mining Industry in the United States, 1931-77*, Informational Report 1132 (Washington: GPO, 1984); Prouty, *More Deadly Than War*, 200-202.

machinery stirred up respirable mineral particles. Underground coal and metal miners often reported dust so thick they could not see their hands held in front of their faces. In the ore-processing mills and anthracite breakers adjacent to many mines, employees were exposed to high levels of air contamination. More than any other group of workers, miners and mill workers became victims of the pneumoconioses, the chronic respiratory disorders caused by microscopic dust particles. Asbestos miners and millers contracted asbestosis. Hardrock workers and stone quarriers suffered silicosis, from inhaling such silicious minerals as quartzite and granite.

Workers exposed to pure silica faced grave danger. Union Carbide Corporation selected the path for a tunnel through Gauley Mountain not only to transport water, but also to exploit the deposits of pure silica within the mountain. Hence, digging the Hawk's Nest Tunnel at Gauley Bridge, West Virginia, during 1930-1931 became the worst occupational health and safety disaster in U.S. history. By conservative estimation, more than 700 employees—three-quarters of them African American—perished during this project. Dust doses were so intense that the normal gradual trajectory of this chronic disease was condensed; many expired after mere months of exposure, not decades. An unknown number of victims were buried in a farmer's field near the mouth of the tunnel. Coal workers were victimized by silicosis from exposure to rock dust, but were more frequently disabled by coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung. Beyond the pneumoconiotic scarring of the lungs, other workers—notably miners of asbestos and uranium—incur work-induced cancers.

Although the prevalence of occupational disease in the extractive sector remains unknown, evidence indicates that respiratory diseases alone disabled and killed far more employees than did all types of occupational trauma combined. The problem of work-induced illness only worsened between the mid-19th and the mid-20th centuries. In the early decades of this century, perhaps one-fifth of all hardrock miners had silicosis. The prevalence of pneumoconiosis in the coal industry prior to the mid-1960s is elusive, but evidence suggests that at least 10 percent of the active workforce may have suffered from this type of disorder. Despite systematic attempts to trivialize the extent and severity of dust-induced disease,⁷⁸ these maladies cut a swath through the extractive workforce during the era of industrialization.

COMPANY TOWNS

Beyond the exchange of labor for compensation, extractive employees became entangled in comprehensive, sometimes feudalistic, relations with employers. Because most work sites were isolated, often by rugged terrain, management assumed varied ancillary functions. Thousands of firms ran stores or provided housing for employees. From the southwestern oilpatch boomtowns to the eastern coal camps, the characteristic form of architecture was the "shotgun house." (The

⁷⁸ Derickson, *Workers' Health, Workers' Democracy*, 39-53; idem, "Federal Intervention in the Joplin Silicosis Epidemic, 1911-1916," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 62 (1988), 236-51; David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, *Deadly Dust: Silicosis and the Politics of Occupational Disease in 20th-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Wendy Richardson, "The Curse of Our Trade: Occupational Disease in a Vermont Granite Town," *Vermont History* 60 (1992), 5-28; Martin Cherniack, *The Hawk's Nest Incident: America's Worst Industrial Disaster* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Alan Derickson, "Occupational Disease and Career Trajectory in Hard Coal, 1870-1930," *Industrial Relations* 32 (1993), 94-110; Howard Ball, *Cancer Factories: America's Tragic Quest for Uranium Self-Sufficiency* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993); U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, *Occupational Respiratory Diseases* (Washington: GPO, 1976), passim, esp. 222-23, 273-75, 305, 336-52; Keith Schneider, "Uranium Miners Inherit Dispute's Sad Legacy," *New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1990, A1, A20.

name derived from its simple design, which featured a central hall that ran the length of the building. If a shotgun were fired in the front door, the shot would exit the back door without touching anything inside.) Many companies fed their workforce. Logging-camp cookhouses served three to five meals daily to dozens or sometimes hundreds of lumberjacks. Workers consumed a diet that averaged up to 9,000 calories per day. To supply the cookhouse opened at Samoa, California, in 1892, the Hammond Lumber Company maintained its own farms, ranches, dairies, and slaughterhouses. Such activities illustrate an instance in which welfare concerns for producing social order in the long term were overshadowed by concerns for reproducing labor power in the short term. More commonly, the tasks of feeding, bathing, massaging, and nurturing fell to workers' wives or other female household members.

Many firms created company towns with privately owned schools, saloons, and other institutions. For instance, at the turn of the century, the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company owned "the water works, smelting works, its docks, railroads, churches twenty-six in number, eight schools, hospitals and almost everything else" in the copper-mining center of Calumet, Michigan. Similarly, Windber, Pennsylvania, a coal community built in 1897 by Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, boasted a range of institutions. Distribution of company services and placement of company facilities reflected and reaffirmed racial segregation. Indeed, that pattern preceded erection of the Jim Crow system and extended beyond the southeastern U.S. New Almaden, California, site of the New Almaden Mine, exhibited segregation in the mid-19th century. At this operation of the Quicksilver Mining Company near San Jose, which produced one third of the nation's mercury in the century after its opening in 1846, separate schools and hospitals served the "Spanish camp" and the "English camp" by 1860. In the most extreme manifestation of segregation, the turpentine camps in Georgia and Florida employed only African-American workers. With the abolition of slavery, turpentine firms used the company store (together with the criminalization of indebtedness), convicts, and other methods to maintain an unfree labor force.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ *Mining and Scientific Press*, May 13, 1899, 509 (quotation); Joseph R. Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie?," *Journal of Forest History* 23 (1979), 164-85; Heber Blankenhorn, *The Strike for Union: A Study of the Non-Union Question in Coal and the Problems of a Democratic Movement* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1924), passim, esp. 19-21, 258-59; Priscilla Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines: A History of America's Bloody Coal Industry* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 42-43, 78-83; Frederic J. Athearn, "Preserving Our Nuclear History: A 'Hot' Topic," *CRM*, 17: 5 (1994), 10-11; Larry Lankton, *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 142-218; James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966); idem, "The Company-Owned Mining Town in the West: Exploitation or Benevolent Paternalism?," *Reflections of Western Historians*, ed. John A. Carroll (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969), 177-97; Joseph H. Cash, *Working the Homestead* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1973), 55-79; John Driscoll, "Gilchrist, Oregon, a Company Town," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 85 (1984), 135-53; Roger M. Olien and Diana D. Olien, *Oil Booms: Social Change in Five Texas Towns* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), passim, esp. 51; Daniel C. Fitzgerald, "'We Are All in This Together'—Immigrants in the Oil and Mining Towns of Southern Kansas, 1890-1920," *Kansas History*, 10 (1987), 17-28; Crandall A. Shifflett, *Coal Towns: Life, Work, and Culture in Company Towns of Southern Appalachia, 1880-1960* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Marlene H. Rikard, "An Experiment in Welfare Capitalism: The Health Care Services of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1983), esp. 181ff; Cornford, *Workers and Dissent*, 24-26, 99-115; Henry W. Splitter, "Quicksilver at New Almaden," *Pacific Historical Review*, 26 (1957), 33-49, esp. 46, 48; James F. Fickle, "Race, Class, and Radicalism: The Wobblies in the Southern Lumber Industry, 1900-1916," in *At the Point of Production: The Local History of the I.W.W.*, ed. Joseph R. Conlin (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 98, 101; Shofner, "Forced Labor in Florida Forests," 14-25; idem, "Postscript to the Martin Tabert Case: Peonage as Usual in the Florida Turpentine Camps," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 59 (1981), 161-73; Thomas F. Armstrong, "The Transformation of Work: Turpentine

Despite corporate paternalism, workers in company towns developed a stronger sense of community than existed in many parts of industrializing America. In the coal towns of Appalachia, the mining camps of the West, and the mill towns of the southern piedmont, workers and their families developed bonds of community and networks of mutual assistance to deal with the hardships of industrial labor. Feelings of solidarity among workers' families did little to mitigate poor housing, unsanitary conditions, oppressive management, and the other burdens of life in a company town, but did provide communal ties essential in coping with the difficulties of industrial labor.⁸⁰

UNIONS

Deskilling, occupational hazards, economic insecurity, and managerial paternalism were among the major forces that led extractive workers to organize for self-protection. Increasingly, employees looked to collective strength, not individual virtue, as the way to overcome the imbalance of power between labor and capital. Coal workers first organized in the anthracite district of Pennsylvania in 1849, in opposition to low pay and high prices at the company store. The first hardrock union emerged in the silver mines of the Comstock Lode of Nevada in 1863. Although both these efforts aborted, durable local foci of unionism emerged after 1870. In particular, the copper miners' organization in Butte, Montana, founded in 1878, grew into a formidable stronghold. By the turn of the century, this self-proclaimed Gibraltar of Unionism had more than 6,000 members, making it the largest local union in the U.S. In the extractive industry, the Knights of Labor planted seeds of organization in numerous mining and logging centers in the 1870s and 1880s.⁸¹

Defense of workers' interests meant national, not merely local or regional, organization. Organizing on a broadly inclusive industrial basis was necessary in a time of craft dilution and peril, transcending the craft exclusiveness that prevailed under the American Federation of Labor. With the formation of the Granite Cutters' International Association in 1877, the first permanent national union arose in the extractive sector. In January 1890, representatives of Appalachian and Midwestern coal diggers met at City Hall in Columbus, Ohio, to establish the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA or UMW). Three years later, hardrock workers convened in Butte to organize the Western Federation of Miners (WFM). The driving force in the new federation, the Butte Miners' Union became WFM Local 1 and allowed its hall to be used as the group's headquarters. In timber and petroleum, early attempts to forge national

Workers in Coastal Georgia, 1865-1901," *Labor History* 25 (1984), 518-32. On social and cultural life in communities not dominated by a particular company, see Ralph Mann, *After the Gold Rush: Society in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, 1849-1870* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Katherine A. Harvey, *The Best-Dressed Miners: Life and Labor in the Maryland Coal Region, 1835-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); Wallace, *St. Clair*. For a company town that minimized racial separation and inequality, see Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hraba, and Elmer Schwieder, *Buxton: Work and Racial Equality in a Coal Mining Community* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987) Janice A. Beran, "Diamonds in Iowa: Blacks, Buxton, and Baseball," *Journal of Negro History*, 75 (1990), 81-95.

⁸⁰ This paragraph contributed by Dan Vivian, National Park Service.

⁸¹ Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895: A Study in Democracy* (1929; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), 211-21; Coleman, *Men and Coal*, 46-53; Richard E. Lingenfelter, *The Hardrock Miners: A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West, 1863-1893* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), passim, esp. 32-33, 182-95; Cornford, *Workers and Dissent*, 74-88; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 61-63, 86-87.

institutions failed. It took the surge of organizing of the 1930s to found the Oil Workers International Union (predecessor of today's Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union) and the International Woodworkers of America.⁸²

Mining and logging unions did more than bargain over economic issues. Health and safety concerns drove a search for preventive measures. Beginning in 1911, the WFM won passage of state laws requiring wet methods of dust control. Labor led the fight for the extension of workers' compensation coverage to the pneumoconiosis and other industrial diseases in the hope that social insurance would not only aid those disabled, but create the financial incentive for hazard abatement. In 1941, the UMW negotiated the establishment of union safety committees, an unprecedented institutionalization of rank-and-file activism for self-protection. To prevent workplace injuries, unions pressed for the enactment of mine safety codes and for strict enforcement. To prevent occupational illnesses, unions sought legislation mandating ventilation or dust-suppression technology.⁸³

But because victimization was a reality of extractive labor, unions undertook ambitious mutual-aid programs. By the 1860s, miners' unions sent visiting committees to assist sick and injured members, especially bachelors. Locals arranged for nursing and physician services as an alternative to employer-controlled health care. For example, the Granite Cutters' branch in Barre, Vermont, sponsored a silicosis clinic in its Socialist Labor Party Hall in the 1920s. Many groups built their own hospitals to serve the general public. In 1906, timber and sawmill workers led the campaign to found the Union Labor Hospital in Eureka, California. Beginning in 1891, more than 20 WFM and UMW locals established hospitals. An example was the Miners' Hospital in Park City, Utah founded by Western Federation Local 144 in 1904, over the strenuous opposition of paternalistic mine owners in this silver-mining camp. The mutual-aid endeavors of these unions distinguish them from labor organizations in other sectors of the economy. At the same time, these ventures exemplify the traditions of grassroots self-help among North American working people.⁸⁴

⁸² Coleman, *Men and Coal*, 53ff; Maier B. Fox, *United We Stand: The United Mine Workers of America, 1890-1990* (Washington: UMWA, 1990), 22-29; Jon Amsden and Stephen Brier, "Coal Miners on Strike: The Transformation of Strike Demands and the Formation of a National Union," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 7 (1977), 583-616; Lingenfelter, *Hardrock Miners*, 219-24; Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (New York: International Publishers, 1984), 11ff; Earl B. White, "The IWW and the MidContinent Oil Field," in *American Labor in the Southwest: The First One Hundred Years*, ed. James C. Foster (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982) 65-85; George N. Green, "Labor in the Western Oil Industry," *Journal of the West* 25 (1986), 14-16; O'Connor, *History of Oil Workers*, 1-39.

⁸³ Alan Derickson, "Participative Regulation of Hazardous Working Conditions: Safety Committees of the United Mine Workers of America, 1941-1969," *Labor Studies Journal* 18 (1993), 25-38; Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 155-88; Wyman, *Hard-Rock Epic*, 186ff; Rosner and Markowitz, *Deadly Dust*, 39-43, 146-65; Alexander Trachtenberg, *History of Legislation for the Protection of Coal Miners in Pennsylvania, 1824-1915* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 136ff; Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats and Proletarians," 297; Alan Derickson, "The United Mine Workers of America and the Recognition of Occupational Respiratory Diseases, 1902-1968," *American Journal of Public Health*, 81 (1991), 782-85; cf. James C. Foster, "The Western Dilemma: Miners, Silicosis, and Compensation," *Labor History* 26 (1985), 268-87; idem, "Western Miners and Silicosis: 'The Scourge of the Underground Toiler,' 1890-1943," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 37 (1984), 371-85. Five of the eleven organizational goals enumerated in the preamble to the first UMW constitution dealt with matters of occupational health and safety. See Fox, *United We Stand*, 23-25.

⁸⁴ Richardson, "'Curse of Our Trade,'" 17; Cornford, *Workers and Dissent*, 145, 159; Gutman, "Labor in Land of Lincoln," 124, 130-31; Alan Derickson, "From Company Doctors to Union Hospitals: The First Democratic Health-Care Experiments of the United Mine Workers of America," *Labor History*, 33 (1992), 325-42; idem,

Organized extractive workers contributed to community development in other ways as well. Union halls served the general public, hosting town meetings, theatrical performances, boxing matches, and other events. The library of the Virginia City Miners' Union made its holdings available to the reading public; this was the largest collection of books in Nevada for many years. For decades, the Butte miners' hall was a staging site for the festivities surrounding Miners' Union Day, June 13, a general holiday not only in Butte, but in mining camps across the northern Rockies. The Butte hall had its own bar, which offered an alternative to commercial drinking establishments.⁸⁵

The self-help initiatives of local and district mining unions encompassed ventures into workers' education. Local activists in the WFM organized socialist study groups and sponsored lectures by leading troublemakers. In District 2 of the UMW, John Brophy, developed his own extensive program of Labor Chautauquas and sent rank-and-file coal diggers to learn about labor organizing at the Brookwood Labor College near Katonah, New York in the 1920s. The district held its first Chautauqua session on August 12, 1924, in a park in Six Mile Run, Pennsylvania. Speakers at these meetings advocated nationalization of the coal industry and denounced the Ku Klux Klan, which flourished at that time in central Pennsylvania. Like other labor groups, Brophy's organization published its own newspaper. Similarly, Knights of Labor and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) agitators throughout the extractive sector considered the education of workers on fundamental issues of political economy essential.⁸⁶

Much of this education gave extractive workers awareness of their exploitation by employers and their potential to resist exploitation collectively. Indeed, conflict has characterized labor-management relations in extraction since the arrival of the corporation. Routine disputes over wages, hours, working conditions, and union rights escalated into violence. During the quarter century beginning in 1881, for example, coal mining had more strike activity than any other U.S. industry. Commonly concentrated in remote locales as "isolated masses," extractive laborers have provided the model for the classic formulation of the militant proletariat, highly predisposed to strike.⁸⁷

Workers, Health, 57-154, 214; Wyman, *Hard-Rock Epic*, 178-86; Malcolm J. Rohrbaugh, *Aspen: The History of a Silver-Mining Town, 1879-1893* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 198.

⁸⁵ Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 12-13, 74-76; Green, "Labor in Western Oil," 17; Ralph Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1973), 24-31, 51-52; Lingenfelter, *Hardrock Miners*, 53-54, 132, 133, 186-88, 194. On the cultural and ideological complexities of the working-class community in Butte, see Michael Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981); Jerry W. Calvert, *The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1988); David M. Emmons, *Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), passim, esp. 200. On the manifold functions of drinking places in extractive communities, see Elliott West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Wallace, *St. Clair*, 164-67.

⁸⁶ Alan Singer, "John Brophy's 'Miners' Program': Workers' Education in UMW District 2 during the 1920s," *Labor Studies Journal* 13 (1988), 50-64; Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 21-22; Cornford, *Workers and Dissent*, 82-88.

⁸⁷ P. K. Edwards, *Strikes in the United States, 1881-1974* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 99, 106, 108-9; Amsden and Brier, "Coal Miners on Strike," esp. 602-6; Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike—an International Comparison," in *Industrial Conflict*, eds. Arthur W. Kornhauser, Robert Dubin, and Arthur M. Ross (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), 189-212. For some of the earliest disputes between labor and capital in this sector, see Grace Palladino, *Another Civil War: Labor, Capital, and the State in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1840-68* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Lingenfelter, *Hardrock Miners*; Gutman, "Labor in Land of Lincoln."

Many of these disputes are nationally significant. The strike in the anthracite mines of northeastern Pennsylvania during 1902-1903 was of historic importance in at least three ways. In terms of workdays lost, this stoppage for several months by more than 150,000 employees was the largest strike in the U.S. up to that time. Although the organization would experience many subsequent setbacks, the strike did establish the UMW as the representative of hard-coal workers, a role that continues to present. In addition, the innovative mediating role of federal authorities in this dispute gave the first indication of the major changes in law and policy that unfolded under the New Deal. Unlike its simple duty as strikebreaker in the 19th century, this time the federal government intervened to find facts and to force a compromise settlement. The unprecedented protracted hearings of the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission at the Lackawanna County Courthouse in Scranton captured the attention of the nation throughout the winter of 1902-1903. Although the commission's award gave the hardcoal workers modest advances—such as a one-hour reduction in work time to nine hours per day, not the eight-hour day they sought—this resolution was seen as a victory for unionism. Grateful miners placed a statue of UMW president John Mitchell in front of the Scranton courthouse.⁸⁸

The 1902-1903 anthracite dispute hardly revolutionized public policy toward collective action. Government officials crushed countless subsequent strikes. In the 1917 strike in the Northwest lumber and timber industry, the U.S. Army not only drove off IWW activists, but also organized and sponsored its own pseudo-union, the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. In metal mining, state militias continued to make frequent, usually decisive, appearances on behalf of the owners. Local police and county sheriffs proved to be reliable agents of the employers.⁸⁹

One indication of the intensity of industrial conflict in extraction was the frequent resort to mass arrests and other types of forcible removal of participants from the immediate battle scene. Large-scale internment of striking workers and supporters took place in a number of disputes. For instance, to break the silver-lead miners' strike in the Coeur d'Alene district of Idaho in 1892, hundreds were rounded up and placed in crude stockades. The Idaho state militia kept activists confined in these so-called bullpens in Wallace and Wardner, Idaho, for weeks with disregard for legal due process. The same fate befell coal miners in numerous localities, such as Paint Creek, West Virginia, during the 1912-1913 strike.⁹⁰

When workers resided in company-owned housing, work stoppages brought mass evictions. Evicted strikers often were forced into makeshift accommodations. When the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and other southern Colorado mine operators drove coal miners from their homes in September 1913, the miners set up a sizable tent colony near the town of Ludlow. Continual

⁸⁸ Robert J. Cornell, *The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1957); Robert H. Wiebe, "The Anthracite Strike of 1902: A Record of Confusion," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 48 (1961), 229-51; Miller and Sharpless, *Kingdom of Coal*, 241-83; Blatz, *Democratic Miners*, 99-169; Derickson, "UMW and Recognition of Occupational Diseases," 782-84; cf. Joe Gowaskie, "John Mitchell and the Anthracite Mine Workers: Leadership Conservatism and Rank-and-File Militancy," *Labor History* 27 (1985-86), 54-83.

⁸⁹ Robert L. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer: The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 47 (1960), 434-51; Benjamin G. Rader, "The Montana Lumber Strike of 1917," *Pacific Historical Review*, 36 (1967), 189-207; George G. Suggs, Jr., *Union-Busting in the Tri-State: The Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri Metal Workers, Strike of 1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), passim, esp. 80116; Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict*, 120-52, 229-35, 277-86, 345-49.

⁹⁰ Robert W. Smith, *The Coeur d'Alene Mining War of 1892: A Case Study of an Industrial Dispute* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1961), 80-105; Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict*, 130-39; Fox, *United We Stand*, 152.

attacks on the colony by private guards and local and state authorities culminated on April 20, 1914. That day's onslaught of gunfire and arson, the Ludlow Massacre, claimed 24 lives, including those of 2 women and 11 children who succumbed to smoke suffocation. Along with their mothers, the children had hidden in shallow pits dug below the tents in order to be safe from flying bullets. The event outraged the nation for a short while.⁹¹

Another method of displacement was mass deportation. To defeat a strike by the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, vigilantes ran at least 200 people out of Merrysville, Louisiana, between February 16 and February 18, 1912. A quarter century later, mobs expelled striking lumberjacks and sawmill workers from Newberry and other towns on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In hardrock mining, forcible expulsion of strikers and even non-striking activists occurred in the course of numerous labor-management confrontations. In the most notorious incident, vigilantes acting on behalf of management rounded up 1,186 copper workers and sympathizers in Bisbee, Arizona, on July 12, 1917. The detainees were placed in cattle and boxcars with minimal amounts of food and water and transported through the desert to the tiny, remote town of Hermanas, New Mexico. There the strikers were released with the warning not to return to their homes. The next day the U.S. Army took the deportees to Columbus, New Mexico, where they were housed in tents for two months. This affair was one of several expulsions of IWW members and supporters during the summer of 1917. Taken together, these episodes of confinement, eviction, and deportation demonstrate the way in which industrial disputes in extraction were invariably contests to control territory, as well as to control the terms and conditions of employment.⁹²

Other extreme instances of lethal violence by public authorities and private parties abounded. (The public-private distinction blurred when vigilantes, private detectives, and private guards were deputized en masse.) On September 10, 1897, sheriff's deputies shot and killed 19 unarmed coal miners, all Slavic immigrants, who had peacefully marched from Harwood, Pennsylvania, to the company village of Lattimer, six miles away. In the midst of a regional strike for the eight-hour day, a boatload of timber and sawmill workers organized by the IWW traveled to Everett, Washington, on November 5, 1916. They were met at the docks by a hail of gunfire from local police and vigilantes. The exact death toll remains unknown—the bodies of five Wobblies (nickname for IWW workers) were found, and other casualties may have been lost in the waters of Port Gardner Bay.⁹³

⁹¹ George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972); Zeese Papanikolas, *Buried Unsung: Louis Tikas and the Ludlow Massacre* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1982); Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 261ff; H. M. Gitelman, *Legacy of the Ludlow Massacre: A Chapter in American Industrial Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict*, 269.

⁹² Merl E. Reed, "Lumberjacks and Longshoremen: The I.W.W. in Louisiana," *Labor History* 13 (1972), 49; Debra Bernhardt, "Ballad of a Lumber Strike," *Michigan History*, 66 (1982), 40, 42; James W. Byrkit, *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor Management War of 1901-1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), passim, esp. 157-215; Philip Taft, "The Bisbee Deportation," *Labor History* 13 (1972), 3-40; John H. Lindquist and James Fraser, "A Sociological Interpretation of the Bisbee Deportation," *Pacific Historical Review* 37 (1968), 401-22, esp. 413; Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict*, 139-52, 285-86; John E. Haynes, "Revolt of the 'Timber Beasts': IWW Lumber Strike in Minnesota," *Minnesota History* 42 (1971), 173.

⁹³ Norman H. Clark, *Mill Town: A Social History of Everett Washington, from Its Earliest Beginnings on the Shores of Puget Sound to the Tragic and Infamous Event Known as the Everett Massacre* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 198-214; Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1967), 73-84.

The violence of the West Virginia coal-mining war of 1920-1921 reached a level unparalleled in U.S. history. When agents of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency came to Matewan, West Virginia, to evict fired pro-union miners from housing owned by the Stone Mountain Coal Company, they met opposition from the local police chief, Sid Hatfield. On May 19, 1920, Hatfield and a group of miners engaged the Baldwin-Felts agents in a gunfight in the business district of Matewan. Nine men died, including six detectives. Guerrilla skirmishing escalated across southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky in the summer of 1920 as the UMW struck for recognition, higher wages, and other elementary demands. At its peak, the magnitude of the armed forces arrayed in one place on each side of this struggle surpassed that in any previous North American labor dispute. Commencing on August 19 in Marmet, an army of approximately 6,000 miners and their allies set forth, heavily armed, on a march to aid their comrades in Logan and Mingo counties. To resist this invasion, coal operators marshaled a force of roughly 2,000 sheriff's deputies and private agents. The operators also enlisted military power. After declaring the march an insurrection, West Virginia's Governor received federal assistance. President Warren Harding dispatched more than 2,000 U.S. Army troops as well as aircraft from the 88th Light Bombing Squadron. When the combatants approached Logan County at the end of August, the total number of belligerents had swelled to at least 10,000. For a week, fighting raged along several miles of battlefield on Blair Mountain. The army of sheriff's deputies, state militia, state police, and private mine guards resisted the miners with an armament that included machine guns and poisonous gas. On August 31, 1920, workers underwent aerial bombardment for the first time in the history of U.S. industrial relations. Finally, the coal operators' superior firepower and the authority of a presidential proclamation ordering the miners to disperse repelled the invaders. This defeat contributed to the larger defeat of mining unionism in the expanding area of coal production south of the Ohio River in the years after World War I.⁹⁴

Taken together, the Battle of Blair Mountain, the Bisbee Deportation, the Ludlow Massacre, the Everett Massacre, and similar episodes form a pattern of conflict. Unlike industries where one or a handful of major confrontations punctuated labor-management relations, extraction's competitive economic conditions, routine risks of death on the job, isolation, and quasi-feudalism combined explosively to set the tone of industrial relations in the century up to World War II.

LABOR LEADERS

Several major labor leaders arose in the extractive industries after 1840. The conflicts of interest between employers and employees produced strong advocates and shrewd strategists. The unending challenge of achieving union recognition in these industries brought forth a number of creative, courageous organizers. Any social justice and civil liberties attained by workers in extraction and in other industries derives in large part from these individuals' efforts.

⁹⁴ Lon Savage, *Thunder in the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920-21* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990); David Alan Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 195-247; Fred Mooney, *Struggle in the Coal Fields: The Autobiography of Fred Mooney*, ed. by J. W. Hess (Morgantown: West Virginia University Library, 1967), 71-78, 86-100; Winthrop D. Lane, *Civil War in West Virginia: A Story of the Industrial Conflict in the Coal Mines* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1921); Daniel P. Jordan, "The Mingo War: Labor Violence in the Southern West Virginia Coal Fields, 1919-1922," in *Essays in Southern Labor History: Selected Papers, Southern Labor History Conference, 1976*, ed. Gary M. Fink and Merl E. Reed (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 102-43; Clayton D. Laurie, "The United States Army and the Return to Normalcy in Labor Dispute Interventions: The Case of the West Virginia Coal Mine Wars, 1920-1921," *West Virginia History* 50 (1991), 1-24.

Born in a coal-mining family in Scotland in 1862, William B. Wilson grew up in the company village of Arnot, Pennsylvania. His father's disability from "miners' asthma" (black lung) and other work-induced afflictions forced Wilson to take a mining job at the age of nine. By age 14, he was secretary of a local affiliate of the Miners' and Laborers' Benevolent Association; by 18, he had been barred from the mines of central Pennsylvania as an agitator. During much of the 1880s, Wilson recruited coal workers into the Knights of Labor. In this capacity, he drew no salary and often did not even recover travel expenses. In 1890, Wilson helped found the UMW. As president of UMW District 2 in the 1890s, he continued organizing work and, in consequence, continued to be arrested and hounded for his efforts. In 1896, Wilson purchased a small farm near Blossburg, Pennsylvania, a few miles from Arnot. For years, he and his family worked the farm and resided in a plain, one-story clapboard house. This house and barn gave refuge to union supporters evicted from company housing. The house also provided a haven for Mother Jones when she came to the aid of local strikers in the winter of 1899-1900.

In 1906, Wilson won election to Congress, defeating a Republican millionaire incumbent. Son of a discarded worker, Wilson knew the nation's poorhouses were full of old, worn-out workers and that voluntary retirement was virtually unknown to the working class. Accordingly, in 1909, he introduced the first proposal for a federal old-age pension plan. The former child laborer worked with Progressive reformers to pass legislation establishing the Children's Bureau in the Department of Commerce and Labor to press for prohibitive legislation and other protections for the youngest members of the workforce. Wilson promoted the establishment of a cabinet-level federal labor agency. In 1913, President Woodrow Wilson created the U.S. Department of Labor and appointed William Wilson as its first secretary. In this position, Wilson, who was not only the son of an occupational disease victim, but a victim of black lung himself, sponsored numerous federal investigations of industrial health hazards. In addition, his administration created the Conciliation Service, forerunner of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and helped lay the groundwork for the Women's Bureau established in 1920.⁹⁵

A freelance organizer and agitator for half a century, Mother Jones devoted most of her energies to miners' struggles. In 1891, at the age of 61, Mary Harris Jones, an Irish immigrant widow, ventured into her first coal diggers' strike, in Norton, Virginia. Like other early industrial disputes, this one involved a contest over control of space. The coal operators in southwestern Virginia sought to abrogate rights of free speech and free association by denying the UMW any place to meet. As on other occasions in company towns or community settings in which employers held such power, the union found a way to exercise its civil liberties by meeting on

⁹⁵ *United Mine Workers' Journal*, March 1, 1963, 6, 18-20; Roger W. Babson, *W. B. Wilson and the Department of Labor* (New York: Brentano's, 1919), passim, esp. 19, 61-64, 122-25, 140-43, 174-78, 187-94; Herbert G. Gutman, "Two Lockouts in Pennsylvania, 1873-1874," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 83 (1959), 307-26; Paul W. Pritchard, William B. Wilson, Master Workman," *Pennsylvania History* 12 (1945), 81-108; Brophy, *Miner's Life*, 71-73; Jones, *Autobiography*, 31-39; Fox, *United We Stand*, 63; Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 214-16, 418-19; John Lombardi, *Labor's Voice in the Cabinet: A History of the Department of Labor from Its Origin to 1921* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 98; U.S. Department of Labor, *The Anvil and the Plow: A History of the United States Department of Labor* (Washington: GPO, 1963), 3-38. For other manifestations of incomplete proletarianization and its influence on extractive workers' capacity to struggle against their employers, see Green, "Brotherhood of Timber Workers," 177; Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 33-35.

territory outside the mine owners' control. Unable to afford land and a hall, the miners' organization lay claim to public space. As Mother Jones did on other occasions, she addressed large gatherings of miners on state property alongside the road that passed through Norton. Her actions exemplified her courage and defiance of corporate autocracy. They show her tendency to challenge unorganized workers to make a display of their solidarity by literally standing up in public for the union. In contrast, 12 years later when Jones made a foray into the West Virginia coalfields, threats necessitated stealth. She held meetings "in the woods at night, [and] in abandoned mines." Reliance on such tactics offers insight into the precarious status of poor, overmatched labor organizations.⁹⁶

Mother Jones mobilized women to act collectively in strikes and organizing campaigns. A clever manipulator of the gender conventions of her time, Jones knew the narrow limits on capitalist repressive violence whenever women participated in the conflict. Accordingly, she instigated audacious challenges to public authority and private power on picket lines. In the Arnot strike of 1899-1900, she contrived a plan to disperse strikebreakers: "I told the men to stay home with the children for a change and let the women attend to the scabs." Rather than command the operation herself, Jones encouraged one miner's wife to take the lead and others to help force a confrontation at the entrance to the Drip Mouth Mine: "Take that dishpan you have with you and your hammer, and when the scabs and the mules come up, begin to hammer and howl. Then all of you hammer and howl and be ready to chase the scabs with your mops and brooms." This strategy proved effective; the pot-banging commotion frightened the mine mules, and the replacement workers bolted from the mine. The traditional symbols of domesticity and the status of homemakers served well in class combat.⁹⁷

Jones found other ways to destabilize gender roles. For example, she showed neither respect for the traditional superstition that women brought disaster if allowed inside a mine nor regard for ladylike propriety with language. John Brophy recalled his initial encounter with her at the turn of the century: "She came into the mine one day and talked to us in our workplace in the vernacular of the mines. How she got in I don't know, probably just walked in and defied anyone to stop her." Brophy remembered her as someone who "would take a drink with the boys and spoke their idiom, including some pretty rough language when she was talking about the bosses."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Jones, *Autobiography*, 63 (quotation), 24-27; Dale Fetherling, *Mother Jones, the Miners' Angel: A Portrait* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974), 16, 30, 32, 40, 41, 65, 87-88, 90; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 269, 278. For open-air gatherings not involving Mother Jones, see Brophy, *Miner's Life*, 72-73; Blankenhorn, *Strike for Union*, 20-21, 258-59; Singer, "Brophy's Miners' Program," 61; James R. Green, "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1913: A Radical Response to Industrial Capitalism in the Southern U.S.A.," *Past and Present*, (1973), 180-81; Reed, "Lumberjacks and Longshoremen," 49.

⁹⁷ Jones, *Autobiography*, 34 (quotation), 35 (quotation), 90-91, 202; Fetherling, *Mother Jones*, 41; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 279-86. For other instances of women's mobilization, see Katherine A. Harvey, *The Best-Dressed Miners: Life and Labor in the Maryland Coal Region, 1835-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 292-93; Ann Schofield, "An 'Army of Amazons': The Language of Protest in a Kansas Mining Community, 1921-22," *American Quarterly*, 37 (1985), 686-701; idem, "The Women's March: Miners, Family, and Community in Pittsburg, Kansas, 1921-1922," *Kansas History*, 7 (1984), 159-68; Papanikolas, *Buried Unsung*, 171-73; Gutman, "Labor in the Land of Lincoln," 152-53, 170-71, 186, 190; Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats, and Proletarians," 222ff. For women's mobilization that was hamstrung by gender bias, see Elizabeth Jameson, "Imperfect Unions: Class and Gender in Cripple Creek, 1894-1904," in *Class Sex, and the Woman Worker*, edited by Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 166-202. For an incident in which wives of non-striking miners intervened to ward off strike pickets, see Harvey, *Best-Dressed Miners*, 283-85.

⁹⁸ Brophy, *Miner's Life*, 74 (quotations); Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 89-95; Fetherling, *Mother Jones*,

Upon her death in 1930, Mother Jones was buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive, Illinois. She had selected this site, the only union cemetery in the U.S. at that time, because it was the place of interment of four victims of the Virden Massacre of October 12, 1898, a pivotal event in the unionization of the southern Illinois coal region. For half a century afterward, thousands of miners converged on Mount Olive on the anniversary of the massacre to honor the sacrifices that had founded their organization. At the memorial activities in 1936, a sizable granite monument was dedicated to Jones, honoring her self-sacrifice and undying dedication to her fellows. It embodied the mutual ethos of extractive workers who knew that they depended on co-workers not only for survival but consolation.⁹⁹

One of the challenges facing labor leaders in the extractive sector was that of transcending ethnic and racial divisions in the workforce. Although hardly free from the racial and ethnic prejudices that pervaded American society, extractive unions made pioneering advances toward multiracial harmony. The western hardrock organizations, especially under the banner of the IWW, recruited Mexican-American laborers and Asian immigrants. In organizing African-Americans, the UMW led the way in many respects. By 1900, the UMW had approximately 20,000 black members, making it one of the largest biracial organizations in an increasingly segregated society.¹⁰⁰

The career of Richard L. Davis reflects the growing, but limited, commitment to solidarity across racial lines. Born in Roanoke in 1864, Davis first worked as a miner in West Virginia. In 1882, he moved to Rendville, Ohio, in the Hocking Valley mining district, where he resided for the rest of his life. (Such long tenure, especially given that local operators barred him from employment, suggests that he may have owned a home.) Large numbers of blacks had first arrived in the southeastern Ohio mines to break a strike in 1874-1875. Davis found employment at Mine 3, the

passim, esp. 134-48; Jones, *Autobiography*.

⁹⁹ John H. Keiser, "The Union Miners Cemetery at Mt. Olive, Illinois: A Spirit-Thread of Labor History," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 62 (1969): 229-66; Archie Green, *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 241-77; Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 166-68; Brophy, *Miner's Life*, 76; Derickson, "Company Doctors to Union Hospitals," 331; Derickson, *Workers' Health*, 73-85. On funerals in slave culture, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974) 194-202.

¹⁰⁰ William R. Kenny, "Mexican-American Conflict on the Mining Frontier, 1848-1852," *Journal of the West* 6 (1967), 582-92; Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 46-60; Emmons, *Butte Irish*, passim; Ronald C. Brown, *Hard-Rock Miners: The Intermountain West, 1860-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1979), 9, 131-35, 146-47; Papanikolas, *Buried Unsung*, passim; Miller and Sharpless, *King of Coal*, 135ff; Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: Quadrangle, 1969), 127; Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780-1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987); Joe W. Trotter, Jr., *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915-32* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 164-66; Daniel Letwin, "Race, Class, and Industrialization in the New South: Black and White Coal Miners in the Birmingham District of Alabama, 1878-1897" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1991); Fox, *United We Stand*, 37-38, 102-12; Herbert G. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America: The Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning, 1890-1900," in Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Work Class and Social History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 121-208, esp. 187; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 159-65; William Regensburger, "The Emergence of Industrial Unionism in the South, 1930-1945: The Case of Coal and Metal Miners," in *How Mighty a Force?: Studies of Workers' Consciousness and Organization in the United States*, ed. Maurice Zeitlin (Los Angeles: UCLA, Institute of Industrial Relations, 1983), 65-127.

only mine in the Sunday Valley Creek area that hired African-Americans. During the 1880s, he became involved with the Knights of Labor. In 1890, he was a delegate at the founding convention of the UMW. Active in his local in Rendville, he not only handled grievances as a member of the mine committee, but also served as the checkweighman at Mine 3. In 1896, Davis, who had criticized the exclusion of blacks from union leadership, won election to the UMW National Executive Board. He became the first African American to act as a national officer of any major union in the U.S. By this time, recruitment of African Americans had taken on urgency due to their increased use as strikebreakers. A fearless organizer, Davis accepted a series of perilous assignments throughout the 1890s. In 1898, he observed, "I have had the unpleasant privilege of going into the most dangerous places in this country to organize." This pioneering advocate of interracial unionism died of "lung fever" in 1900. Davis's significance consists not only in attainment of national office, but also in his embodiment of the masses of unheralded rank-and-file activists, who continued to work in their trade between local and national organizing projects.¹⁰¹

William D. Haywood was another early champion of race-blind unionism. Like Mother Jones, Haywood's organizing ranged across the U.S. workforce, but centered on extractive workers. The son of a hardrock miner, Big Bill Haywood was born in Salt Lake City in 1869. At age 15, he was digging for silver in the Ohio Mine at Rebel Creek, Nevada, a remote site more than 50 miles from any sizable town. While staying in the company bunkhouse, isolated from commercial culture, Haywood and his fellow employees entertained themselves with long discussions. In this setting, he learned what he called "my first lessons in unionism" from a co-worker who was a member of the Knights of Labor and a veteran of the miners' unions in Bodie, California, and Virginia City, Nevada. Haywood's recollection of the rude, cramped accommodations at Rebel Creek indicate that they typified miners' dormitories of the period:

It was built of lumber and was about twenty-eight feet long, fourteen feet wide, divided in two by a partition. In the front room bunks were ranged, double length and three high. In this room there were no chairs, no tables, no furniture of any kind other than a desk and the stuff belonging to the men, consisting almost entirely of blankets and clothing, and a few suitcases and bags thrown under the lower bunks.

The second room had a big cook-stove in the corner, a kitchen table and a cupboard along one wall. Along the other wall, where there was a window, was a long table covered with brown flower-patterned oil-cloth, with benches running the full length on either side. Overhead on the beams were piled the groceries and other supplies and the bunk of the Chinese cook, which was reached by a ladder.

A decade later, Haywood joined and immediately became a leader in the WFM while working in southwestern Idaho. As an activist in WFM Local 66, he played an important part in founding the Silver City Miners' Union Hospital in 1897. In 1901, Haywood was elected secretary-treasurer of WFM and resettled in its general headquarters in Denver. Serving as both

¹⁰¹ Gutman, "Negro and UMW," 121-208, esp. 127 (Davis quotation); Fox, *United We Stand*, 37-38; Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, 100-2.

administrator and organizer, he soon found himself on the front lines of two of the roughest strikes in U.S. history, in Cripple Creek and Telluride, Colorado.

Frustrated with defeated strikes in his own industry and with the defeatist attitude of the mainstream labor movement, Haywood played a prominent role in launching the IWW. In fact, it was he who called to order the first session of the founding convention in Brand's Hall in Chicago on June 27, 1905. For the next 16 years, Haywood deployed a repertoire of leadership skills—recruiting, negotiating, troubleshooting, restructuring, even recordkeeping—attempting to build a radical movement open to all wage-earners. He continued to devote a large share of his time to organizing campaigns and labor-management disputes in the extractive sector. These included the western Louisiana lockout against the Brotherhood of Timber Workers of 1912, the iron miners' strike on the Mesabi Range in 1916, the Bisbee events, and other no-holds-barred affairs.¹⁰²

John L. Lewis, a towering figure in the history of American labor, made numerous contributions to national economic and political affairs. Between 1934 and the 1960s, the planning center and meeting place for some of Lewis's boldest initiatives was the general headquarters of the union in Washington, D.C. In 1934, the headquarters was located in the Tower Building at the corner of 14th and K Streets on Franklin Square. In 1936, the UMW moved to the University Club Building at 900 15th Street NW, which then became known as the United Mine Workers' Building. The headquarters had been relocated to Washington from Indianapolis, marking the increasing distance between the organization's top leaders and the rank-and-file. By all appearances a conventional urban office building, the structure conveys cultural conservatism. By selection of this building, Lewis, who wore three-piece suits and drove a Cadillac, projected a respectable image of business unionism. In this regard, the UMW president personified a tendency within the national leadership of American unions and within the working class as a whole in the mid-20th century.

But this conservative could be a militant organizer. The UMW president became increasingly exasperated with the unwillingness of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to organize the mass-production industries. The refusal of the 1935 AFL convention to move decisively to recruit less skilled industrial labor precipitated a historic initiative. On November 9, 1935, Lewis met at UMW headquarters with a small group of other dissident labor leaders to found the Committee for Industrial Organization. After three years of frenetic organizing and quarrels with the old guard, this committee broke away to become the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), with an aggregate membership of more than three million. Both architect and master builder of the CIO, John L. Lewis was elected its first president. Basic industries that eluded unionization for decades were largely organized by the end of World War II. Blue-collar workers at last had both a collective voice and some measure of countervailing power against the giant corporations that had dictated the terms and conditions of their employment.

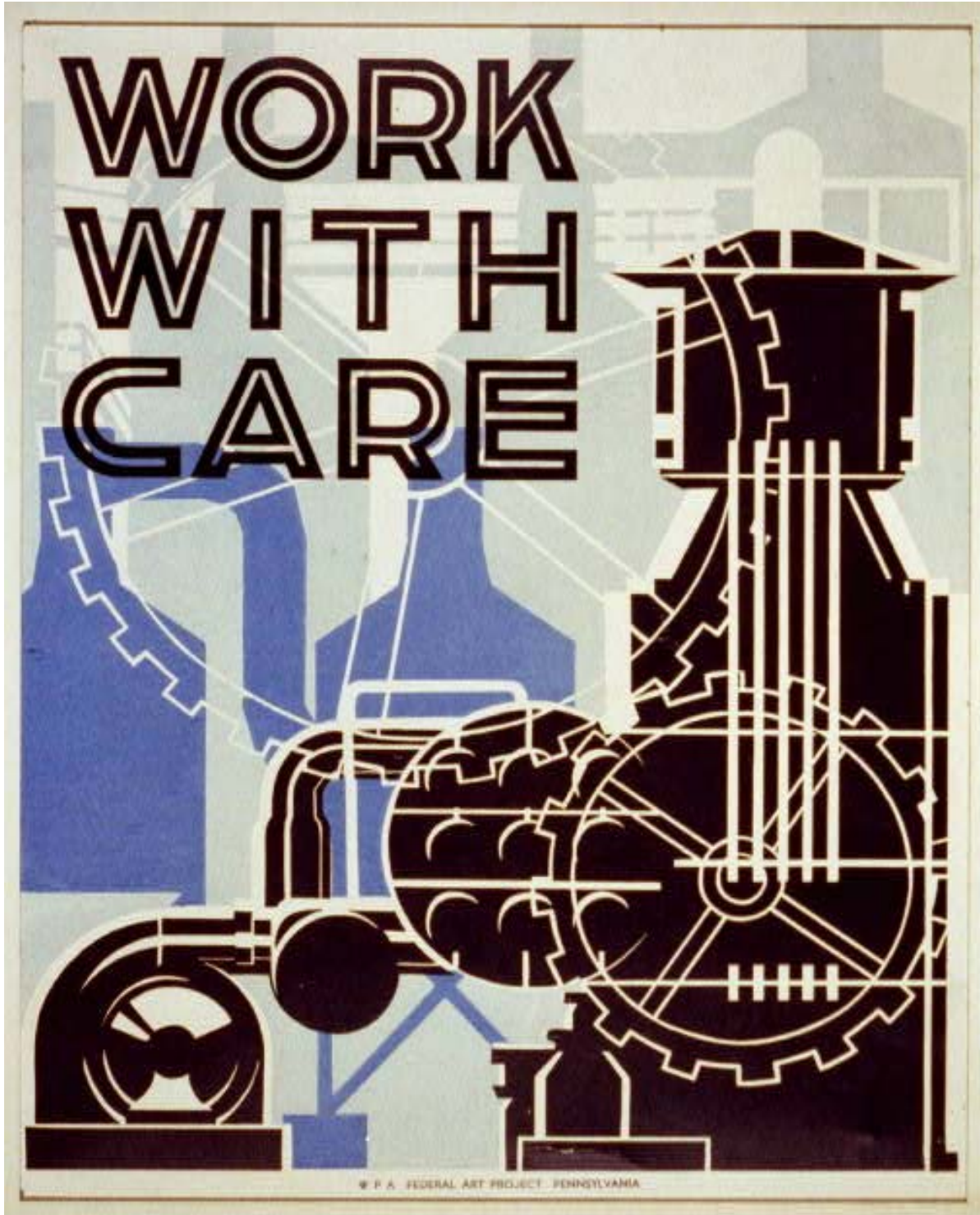
¹⁰² William D. Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book: The Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929), passim, esp. 30 (quotation), 22 (quotation); Peter Carlson, *Roughneck: The Life and Times of Big Bill Haywood* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), passim, esp. 33-36, 39-40, 78-84; Joseph R. Conlin, *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969); Derickson, *Workers' Health*, ix-x, 99; William Carter, *Ghost Towns of the West* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Lane Publishing, 1978), 157; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, passim, esp. 81, 216, 330-33, 388-89.

Another of Lewis's accomplishments arose in part from work done in the union headquarters. As an autocrat, Lewis manipulated the formal policy-making mechanisms of the union in setting and pursuing bargaining objectives. In the bituminous segment of the industry, Lewis executed a strategy of market unionism that aimed not only to raise the price of labor but, most remarkably, to rationalize the industry itself. His insistence on high, uniform labor rates drove soft-coal operators to accelerate mechanization. His single-minded devotion to high wage, capital-intensive production fostered employer organization in the chaotic bituminous fields. With the succession of master agreements between the UMW and the soft-coal operators that began in 1933, Lewis's vision of a stable, modernized, unionized industry was gradually achieved. That this accord required the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and a precipitous deterioration in working conditions was, to the hard-nosed Lewis, the price of progress.¹⁰³

Like so many other accommodations in the volatile resource-based industries of the U.S., Lewis's system offered no lasting truce between labor and capital. In this sector of the economy, not one group—union leaders, corporate managers, rank-and-file workers—could impose stability in the century after 1840. Instead, miners, lumberjacks, and petroleum workers experienced insecurity and remained vulnerable to threats to their jobs, their standards of living, and even their lives. Employed in competitive industries that pared labor costs, extractive workers faced a harsh economic calculus. Against this calculus, they upheld their own humanistic standards—mutuality, security, dignity, autonomy, and survival.

¹⁰³ Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Quadrangle, 1977); Robert H. Zieger, *John L. Lewis: Labor Leader* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988); Curtis Seltzer, *Fire in the Hole: Miners and Managers in the American Coal Industry* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 34ff; David Brody, "Market Unionism in America: The Case of Coal," in Brody, *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 131-74; Morton S. Baratz, *The Union and the Coal Industry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955); James P. Johnson, *The Politics of Soft Coal: The Bituminous Industry from World War I through the New Deal* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979); Dix, *What's a Coal Miner to Do?*; John L. Lewis, *The Miners' Fight for American Standards* (Indianapolis: Bell Publishing, 1925).

AMERICAN MANUFACTURE: SITES OF PRODUCTION AND CONFLICT



Poster encouraging safety in the workplace, showing machinery.

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AMERICAN MANUFACTURE: SITES OF PRODUCTION AND CONFLICT¹⁰⁴

The history of American manufacture is complex. Diversity in products and work environments is a hallmark of the country's industrial past. Americans produced a fabulous array of both specialized and standardized goods in many different kinds of settings. Scholars can delineate various stages of development, but the history of American manufacture is not linear. Old practices persisted as new revolutionary methods of production were introduced. Conflict—often bloody—between managers and workers shaped the process. America's industrial history was multifaceted and contested. This essay paints a portrait of the country's industrial heritage with a broad brush; the complexities still must be appreciated.

MANUFACTURE BEFORE INDUSTRY

Before the commercialization of manufacture, the spread of wage labor, and the advent of the factory system, America manufactured goods in profusion. The home was a prime site of production. In the colonial period especially, family members produced cloth, garments, tools, and furniture for their direct use. Division of labor by generation and sex prevailed; adults and children, males and females had respective tasks. Families fashioned wares for their own use into modern times, in the countryside and in cities. All of this production went unrecorded in official counts of our nation's gross national product.

The artisan shop was another prime location of manufacture before greater industrialization. In cities such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, master silversmiths, cabinetmakers and tailors produced fine items to order. The craftshop was a household. Living with masters and their families were apprentices and often journeymen who served for fixed periods of time. The apprentices labored for their masters and received lodging, board and education in the so-called mysteries of the trades. Journeymen who completed their apprenticeships gained further instruction and experience as part of their passage to masterhood. The artisan shop represented an ideal of a society of yeoman producers whose very autonomy and dignified work made for their wise citizenry. Masters and their charges were hardly equals, but they shared a vision that service was but a step toward independent producership. A breakdown of craft practices in the early 19th century would generate the first labor protests in the country.¹⁰⁵ The ideal of the independent producer/citizen figured in a remarkable debate that transpired in the late 18th century, also before greater industrialization.

In the 1770s and 1780s, a small cohort of prominent Americans emerged to champion the cause of industry.¹⁰⁶ In pamphlets and newspaper articles they presented various arguments on behalf

¹⁰⁴ Walter Licht, Associate Dean and Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania, prepared this context. Dr. Licht's expertise lies in the history of work and labor markets. His books include: *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century* (a 1983 Princeton University Press publication which received the Philip Taft Labor History Prize), the co-authored *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890-1950* (Temple University Press, 1986), *Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840-1950* (Harvard University Press, 1992), and *Industrializing America: The 19th Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). Dr. Licht is completing a study of the economic decline of the anthracite region of eastern Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁵ Craftwork in the country is treated in Ian Quimby, ed., *The Craftsman in Early America* (New York: W.E. Norton, 1984), footnote 17 cites major works on the nature of social relations and eventual conflict in the craftshop.

¹⁰⁶ The debate on manufacture in the late 18th century is treated in Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980) and John R. Nelson, Jr., *Liberty and*

of increased manufacture. Americans would save money by manufacturing their own goods and reducing imports, dependence on Great Britain and the whims of British mercantile practices would be lessened, and the poor and indigent could be employed in industry. In the event that the new nation had to defend itself against military attack, a manufacturing base had to be established to produce the implements of war. Immigration, especially of skilled hands, would be encouraged, and industry and science could help improve agriculture. Two of the above points came to dominate the pro-manufacturing position: the role that industry could play in making the nation strong and independent, and the ability of manufacture to engage the idle, especially women and children who were deemed a population disproportionately poor and slothful. Thus, decades prior to women and children staffing America's first factories, industrial advocates linked women's and children's labor with manufacturing.

Advocates of manufacture faced stiff opposition. Prominent figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison raised notable objections. As men of science and invention, they were not enemies to mechanical innovation; rather they saw the emergence of an industrial sector as a threat to the republic. In their minds, manufacture led to the growth of masses of property-less workers crowded into cities, hired cheaply without any greater obligations as to their welfare and easily appealed to by ambitious politicians. Maintaining a republic meant fostering conditions under which a virtuous, public-minded citizenry would emerge that required an economic system based on independent and dignified work.

The anti-manufacture position must be understood in the context of the American Revolution. For Jefferson and others, manufacture was only part of a greater evil. That evil was the recently overthrown mercantile political economic order marked by royal despotism, court favor and corruption, aristocratic opulence, the privileging of the merchant community, rural depopulation and degeneration, and urban growth, poverty and crisis. Industry meant either the great workshops of the crown that produced luxuries and encouraged venality or the urban manufactories employing the multitudes of displaced and poor of the society. The argument against manufacture then came as part of a critique of mercantilism, and nowhere is this better exemplified than in the controversy spawned by the creation of the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacture (SUM) in 1791.¹⁰⁷

Tench Cox, the leading voice for manufacture at the time, had developed the idea for a large industrial experiment, and he conferred with Alexander Hamilton who prevailed on a group of New York merchants and bankers to invest in the venture. A great industrial works with a series of mills for the manufacture of paper, shoes, pottery, beer, and textiles was to be built near the falls of the Passaic River in what would become the city of Paterson, New Jersey. The investors organized as SUM received a charter of incorporation from the state legislature of New Jersey, which offered numerous privileges and immunities. Construction of raceways to power the mills began, but subsequent financial, management and labor problems stopped the grand scheme in its tracks. The project provoked fierce attacks that had political repercussions for years.

Property: Political Economy and Policymaking in the New Nation, 1789-1812 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). Opinion pieces of the day have been anthologized in Michael B. Folsom and Steven D. Lubar, eds., *The Philosophy of Manufactures: Early Debates over Industrialization in the United States* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁷ A detailed history of the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacture (SUM) can be found in Joseph S. Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations, Numbers I-III* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917).

A minister of government, one suspected of monarchial leanings, conspired with wealthy associates to create a private enterprise that received public privileges and a monopoly position. A manufacturing city with masses of wage laborers was to be erected in the pristine wilderness of the new republic. SUM came under assault in speeches, pamphlets, and the press and would still the movement of manufacture. Jefferson and his supporters subsequently used the Paterson venture and other incidents in the 1790s to build a strong anti-Hamiltonian, anti-mercantilist political movement upholding small-producer ideals.

American had not even begun its industrial history, and manufacture already emerged as a matter of contention. The late 18th century debate on manufacture reveals the anxieties and vying visions held by Americans at the dawning of their new republic. The debate would endure.

PATHS: THE UNEVENNESS OF EARLY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

America's manufacturing history can be dated to the first decades of the 19th century. Industrialization occurred without regard to the plans of advocates of manufacture or the misapprehension of their opponents. No single path was followed. At least four different histories of early industrial development can be written.

The Mill Village and the Family System of Labor

Samuel Slater immigrated to the United States in 1789, and his services were in immediate demand. Slater had just finished an apprenticeship in a cotton mill in his native England, and he possessed rare knowledge in cotton textile technologies. In the U.S., he soon found himself employed by the Brown family of Providence, Rhode Island, who were successful merchants. With the Browns' backing, Slater opened a cotton spinning mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1793, commonly designated as the first successful mechanized spinning operation in the country. Within a short period, Slater and the Browns established a score of other cotton mills in the countryside of Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts.¹⁰⁸

Slater was the most famous of a corps of British skilled mechanics who transferred the technical secrets of the new industrial age to the U.S.¹⁰⁹ He helped forge a particular kind of production system. Agriculture drew all available labor in the vicinity of his mills, and Slater faced problems in staffing his operations. He then moved to attract and hire whole families. He entered into contracts with male heads of households; wives and children would work in the mills, fathers would be offered jobs in supervision, construction, farming on surrounding lands, or in weaving in cottages provided by the company. Necessity forced Slater to rely on the family system of production, but experience played a role, too, for mills had been operated on the same basis in England. Slater created incorporated villages for the families in his hire, complete with

¹⁰⁸ The story of Samuel Slater and the creation of mill villages in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts is told in Barbara Tucker, *Samuel Slater and the Origins of the American Textile Industry, 1790-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) and Jonathan Prude, *The Coming of Industrial Order: Town and Factory Life in Rural Massachusetts, 1810-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁹ The key role played by Slater and other artisans in transferring technological expertise and knowledge from Britain to the United States is related in David Jeremy, *Transatlantic Industrial Revolution: The Diffusion of Textile Technologies between Britain and America, 1790-1830s* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

company houses, stores, schools, and churches. However, desired harmony did not grace his villages; strikes occurred and transience marked the communities.

The mill village with the family system of labor became a basic component of American industrialization. By 1820, more than 400 mill communities had been established in the countryside of the middle Atlantic and New England states, some actually founded by former employees of Slater.¹¹⁰ Many of these villages began to disappear in the late 19th century, but this form of industrial enterprise would proliferate at the same time as expansion of textile production in the South.

Large-Scale Industrialization: The One-Industry City

Francis Cabot Lowell did not rely on immigrants to learn of the new technologies. In 1810, he traveled to England to study industrial development first hand. Lowell was a member of an established Boston merchant family. The strain and uncertainties of commerce had forced him in search of new investment opportunities. Lowell returned to the U.S. with the grand notion of constructing an integrated spinning and weaving mill using state-of-the-art machinery. With \$400,000 pooled from other Boston elite families, he opened a successful spinning and weaving factory in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1814. When waterpower at the site proved too limited for expansion, Lowell and his associates made plans to build a much larger industrial works at a new location, 25 miles north of Boston at the grand falls of the Merrimack River. Lowell would not live to see the awesome industrial city fashioned there from the 1820s to the 1850s that would bear his name.¹¹¹

Textile operations at Lowell, Massachusetts, represented a revolution in financial practices, organization of production, application of technology, and employment of labor. Use of the corporate form of ownership for an industrial enterprise was unique at the time, and staggering sums of money had been raised for investment. The consolidation of production also had no analogue. Under the roofs of the Lowell mills, cotton was cleaned, carded, spun, woven, and finished. The entire process was mechanized, but especially noteworthy was the wholesale adoption of power loom equipment. Finally, there was an extraordinary human story. More than 13,000 men and women came to labor in the Lowell mills by 1850. The managers of the mills could not meet their labor needs by hiring families. They developed a special system of recruiting Yankee farm girls to tend the machinery. Many of these young women saw employment in the mills as an escape from their rural homes, and they boarded in company dormitories. Their ultimate rebellion is a key chapter in the nation's labor history.

Lowell is often pictured as the epitome of American industrialization: large-scale, fully integrated and mechanized-production of a standardized good with the use of a cheap labor

¹¹⁰ Other studies of industrialization in the countryside include Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1978) and Judith A. McGaw, *Most Wonderful Machine: Mechanization and Social Change in Berkshire Paper Making, 1801-1885* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

¹¹¹ The building of the textile center of Lowell, Massachusetts, is treated in Robert F. Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) and Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

source. But Lowell was exceptional, just one route to industrialization. Even among other examples of large-scale development, Lowell is not representative. Consider another case in point: nearby Lynn, Massachusetts, famed center of shoe production.

In 1870, Lynn looked like Lowell with large, mechanized factories, but Lynn had an entirely different industrial history.¹¹² Farm families produced shoes there on a domestic outwork basis as early as the late 18th century. As demand for shoes increased in the 19th century, shoemaking became a full-time pursuit. Typically, shoemakers built small workshops attached to their homes; they continued to receive orders and materials from merchants and employed apprentices and journeymen to assist. A sexual division of labor survived. Women in the homes sewed the uppers of the shoes and men in the shops shaped soles and heels and fastened them to the uppers.

Centralization in production occurred in the 1830s with merchants and enterprising shoemakers establishing large central shops or factories. Young women were hired to stitch the uppers, although married women in the home continued to stitch uppers under contract. Men still fastened the shoes in home workshops, but greater numbers came to labor in the new factory settings. The work still involved hand labor. Then in the 1860s, mill owners introduced the McKay stitcher and larger, mechanized factories appeared. The Lynn story is one of evolution, from domestic outwork to centralization and then mechanization and large-scale factory production; older arrangements continued to persist, though, with new developments. Lowell, on the other hand, emerged uniformly and fully industrialized.

Specialization and the Diversified Manufacturing Center

Lowell and Lynn provided very visible evidence of America's leap into industry. Visitors to the nation's most populated cities, New York and Philadelphia, might have been surprised to learn that they were centers of manufacture. The metropolitan skyline in the mid-19th century revealed a few factory buildings, but nothing on the order of the Lowell mills.

A deliberate investigation would find production flowing everywhere: in cellars and attics, tenement flats, artisan shops, and in a proliferation of indistinguishable small- and medium-sized manufactories. Describing industrial growth in places like New York, Philadelphia, and also Newark, New Jersey, is difficult. There are no leading figures, such as a Slater or Lowell, no single trades, textiles or shoes, or particular inventions to anchor the story. Thousands of separate stories of enterprise have to be told. But, they do add up to a whole. Four characteristics mark the metropolitan path to industrialization.¹¹³

¹¹² The complicated history of shoe production in Lynn, Massachusetts, is rendered in Paul G. Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Alan Dawley, *Class Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); and Mary Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

¹¹³ A critical study of the diversified manufacturing city is Philip Scranton's, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). The opening chapters of the following books also provide fine treatments of uneven industrial development in metropolitan areas: Susan E. Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1978); Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); and Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

The first is product diversity. A remarkable manifest of goods poured from the workshops of New York and Philadelphia, including paints, varnishes, hats, caps, tools, garments, fine instruments, fancy cloth, drugs, jewelry, books, bricks, and tiles. A second characteristic is diversity of work settings, as noted above. Similar goods issued from sweatshops as well as factories, and some items in their completion might pass through several different work environments. Specialization in both operations and products is a third component of the urban production system. Fully integrated enterprises on the order of the Lowell mills were more the exception than the rule; separate establishments emerged as the pattern. Rather than produce coarse standardized goods, city firms prospered by manufacturing small-batch custom items to the specifications of their clients. The small to medium-sized family owned and managed business was a fourth critical feature of metropolitan industrialization. In 1860, in a city such as Philadelphia, the average industrial worker labored in a unit of eight employees, and the corporate form of ownership was a rarity.

Diversified products and work settings, specialized production and the prevalence of proprietorships characterized the mid-19th century urban industrial system. Insufficient waterpower, a relatively large skilled labor base, avoidance of competition with large-scale producers and the monies to be made in specialized production and niche markets, and entrepreneurship of native-born and immigrant artisans are among the factors that contributed to this kind of industrial history.

The Southern Variant: Industrial Slavery

The antebellum South was predominantly a region of plantation agriculture. By 1860, however, the South had achieved manufacturing growth that accounted for 15 percent of the nation's industrial capacity. Slave labor played a significant role in the development of southern industry. A few industrialists warned against the use of slave labor, predicting that slaves would be inefficient or become unruly in an industrial setting. The majority of southern manufacturers ignored such admonishments and relied heavily on slave labor. By the Civil War, between 150,000 and 200,000 African-American slaves were working in southern textile mills, iron works, tobacco processing plants, hemp factories, sugar refineries, and grain and lumber mills. If slave artisans on plantations—carpenters, blacksmiths, and others—were taken into account, the size of the region's slave industrial labor force would be even greater.¹¹⁴

Industrial work forces were predominately male and composed of a mix of slaves owned by the employer and other slaves hired for temporary service, usually for a one-year term. Most industrial slaves worked on a task basis. In the iron district of Virginia, for example, forgemen were required to produce 560 pounds of bar iron per day. Choppers who cut the wood for the charcoal that ran furnaces and forges had to produce nine cords per week. Coopers working in the Kanawha salt district in western Virginia had to assemble seven barrels a day. Tasks were set at a level that an average worker could attain with a day or week of steady labor. Industry tasks were established by custom and seem to have been recognized by both employer and slave.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Fred Bateman and Thomas Weiss, *A Deplorable Scarcity: The Failure of Industrialization in the Slave Economy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Robert Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). This section on industrial slavery was contributed by Dan Vivian, National Park Service.

¹¹⁵ Seymour Drescher and Stanley Engerman, eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 243.

The range of free and slave labor options available to manufacturers was a distinguishing characteristic of the industrial labor market. Employers could own slaves, hire slaves for a specified period of time, or hire free white laborers. As a result, employers had considerable flexibility in determining the composition and organization of the labor force. Southern railroad companies, for example, the largest industrial operations in the antebellum South, experimented with different combinations of free and slave labor in their efforts to maximize efficiency and reduce costs. In industrial settings, slaves performed the most difficult labor; free white workers encountered somewhat better conditions. Except in rare cases, workers were segregated by race.

The conditions of industrial slavery varied. Historians have debated the question of whether slaves working at industrial establishments endured added hardship and abuse. Certainly industrial slaves faced greater danger in their daily work than agricultural laborers. In addition, some scholars have argued that hired slaves were driven especially hard by employers seeking to minimize costs and maximize production. Lacking the slave-owner's interest in protecting his valuable human property, they contend that employers had incentive to subject hired slaves to a harsh work regimen and deprive them of adequate food, clothing, and shelter. Other historians disagree. Although acknowledging that cases of abuse occurred, they argue that widespread mistreatment of hired slaves was unlikely. Hired slaves usually had a voice in deciding where and for whom they would work; some owners left the choice entirely to the slaves themselves. Consequently, employers who wished to secure an adequate labor force year after year had to maintain a good reputation among owners and slaves.¹¹⁶

In contrast to interpretations that emphasize dangerous, often harsh conditions, other historians have argued that industrial labor offered important advantages to slaves. Charles B. Dew's research on the ironmaking industry in antebellum Virginia, for example, has demonstrated that slaves performing skilled labor enjoyed considerable autonomy because of the control they held over the production process. Masters had little choice but to engage in a process of negotiation and accommodation with slaves who possessed essential skills. An incentive system that employed a combination of coercion and reward was common at slave-manned manufacturing establishments in the antebellum South. For example, William Weaver, master of an iron manufacturing operation in Rockbridge County, Virginia, offered payments to skilled slaves for "overwork"—production in excess of a set quota—and avoided the use of disciplinary measures in all but extreme cases. At Buffalo Forge, Weaver's primary production site, workers performing the most critical tasks such as blacksmiths, refiners, and forge carpenters determined the hours and pace of their labor and were allowed to establish bank accounts with money earned for overwork. Sam Williams, the master refiner at the forge, made as much as \$100 per year in the late 1850s, a considerable sum at the time and virtually unheard of for a slave. For Weaver, the system ensured that finished iron products met an acceptable standard of quality and discouraged slaves from resorting to sabotage or work stoppages as a form of resistance. In another case, a Tennessee turnpike company referred to the payments it made to slave workers as "Stimulant & Reward money." While production incentives did not mitigate the dehumanizing aspects of servile labor, they provided slaves with the opportunity to improve living and working

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

conditions for themselves and their families in ways that were hardly common in the Old South.¹¹⁷

Although slave labor was common in southern manufacturing before the Civil War, there were important exceptions, and by the 1850s significant shifts began to take place in key industries. Daniel Pratt and William Gregg, two pioneering leaders in the development of the southern textile industry, relied on free white labor, although in the 1830s and 1840s a significant number of southern mills ran on slave labor. In lengthy articles published in newspapers and journals such as *Debow's Review*, southern industrialists debated the issue of whether it was more advantageous for cotton mill owners to use slave or white labor. William Gregg, who wrote extensively on the subject, initially favored slave labor but later changed his position after commencing operations with white labor at his Graniteville factory in 1849. Other mill owners were already discontinuing use of slave labor, and by 1860 only one mill in South Carolina, Daniel McCullough's factory at Mount Dearborn, had a slave labor force. The critical factor that ultimately tipped the scales in favor of white workers was the rising cost of slaves. With the expansion of the cotton belt into the southwestern frontier, the demand for slaves outpaced the supply, causing prices to begin rising at a steady rate in the 1820s. By 1850 white labor offered a significant cost savings over slaves.¹¹⁸

Pratt's mill at Prattville, Alabama, and Gregg's operations at the Valcluse and Graniteville mills in the Horse Creek Valley of South Carolina drew from the model of industrial paternalism well established in New England. The company towns established by Pratt and Gregg provided workers with housing, schools, and churches to create a stable communities. Contrary to the prevalent myth about the southern yeomanry's preference for agrarian life, neither Gregg nor Pratt had trouble recruiting workers. The families who came to work in the mills left marginal farms to seek a better life working for wages. Whether or not they found it is another question. Dependable workers proved elusive for Pratt and Gregg. Rates of turnover at antebellum cotton mills were extremely high, often as much as 150 percent per year.¹¹⁹

THE DYNAMICS OF EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION

From the very beginning, the U.S. had no single industrial history. That fact has not prevented scholars from trying to devise singular explanations for the nation's initial rapid growth in manufacture. Some historians have found the trigger for early industrialization in geopolitical events. Entanglements in European wars in the first decades of the 19th century spurred efforts at

¹¹⁷ Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 108-121, 183, 367; Drescher, *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*, 244. On the overwork system in general, see also Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*, 99-103; Ronald L. Lewis, *Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 119-127; Dew, "Disciplining Slave Ironworkers in the Antebellum South: Coercion, Conciliation, and Accommodation," *American Historical Review* 79 (April 1974), 405-10. For other studies of industrial slavery, see especially Lewis, *Coal, Iron, and Slaves*; Robert B. Outland, III, "Slavery, Work, and the Geography of the North Carolina Naval Stores Industry, 1835-1860," *Journal of Southern History* 62 (1996), 27-56; John E. Stealey, III, *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business and Western Markets* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993); Stephen T. Whitman, "Industrial Slavery at the Margin: The Maryland Chemical Works," *Journal of Southern History* 59 (1993): 31-62.

¹¹⁸ Ernest M. Lander, Jr., *The Textile Industry in Antebellum South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 55-62, 88-93.

¹¹⁹ Tom E. Terrill, "Eager Hands: Labor for Southern Textiles, 1850-1860," *Journal of Economic History* 36 (March 1976), 84-101; Lander, *Textile Industry in Antebellum South Carolina*, 91-92.

lessening reliance on imported manufactured goods. Other historians have pointed to cotton and slavery. Growing world demand for southern cotton with the revolution in textile production pushed plantation owners to direct all labor toward cotton agriculture. The South became dependent on the North for manufactured wares, and the money made from cotton was transferred north, fostering northern industrial development. Still, other scholars attribute our industrial rise to the impact of railroad construction and operations. In this vein of thought, the railroads created a national marketplace that encouraged manufacture, with the railroad themselves as great consumers of manufactured goods (most notably iron and steel rails). Another group of historians finds the roots of industrialization in the prior commercial experience of the American people and their supposed innate entrepreneurialism. Finally, industrial growth can be attributed to the swelling of the American population in the 19th century from massive immigration and increased demand for manufactured goods. Faults can be cited for the above arguments—although the demographic argument rests on solid ground. Any attempt at an easy answer will fail because of the varied history of industrialization in the U.S.¹²⁰

There is one causative factor that does deserve attention, and that is labor costs, or to be precise, the costs of skilled labor. A relative dearth of skilled labor in certain instances did prove an incentive to substitute capital for labor, thus driving industrial development.¹²¹ Textile production in Lowell, Massachusetts, for example, necessarily took a highly mechanized form with a relative scarcity of weavers. In cities such as Philadelphia, where skilled labor was abundant, handicraft work persisted late into the century.

The high cost of skilled labor played an important (and well publicized) role in gun manufacture. Guns traditionally had been fashioned by hand with individually crafted parts. Assembling the pieces required great time and effort, and skilled fitters could demand high wages and control the pace and quality of production. At the federal arsenals in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harper's Ferry, Virginia, pressure emerged to assemble rifles faster and cheaper with standardized parts. The federal government subsidized innovations with new precision metal-cutting devices. Foreign visitors to these shores in the first decades of the 19th century were captivated by the adoption of standardized parts production techniques in the nation's public and private gunworks and dubbed what they saw the "American system of manufacture." However, developments here did not unfold as smoothly as assumed by foreign reporters. For technical and other reasons, parts production remained imperfect for decades, and the skills of well-trained and paid assemblers were still required. Skilled mechanics also resisted attempts at regimenting their labor, and conflict marked such places as the arsenal at Harper's Ferry.¹²²

A last consideration in the causes of early industrialization is the role of government. Federal, state, and local governments played a significant part in transportation developments in the 19th

¹²⁰ Vying explanations for America's early industrial rise can be found in Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961); Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); and Thomas Cochran, *Frontiers of Change: Early Industrialism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹²¹ A key study on labor scarcity and American economic development is H. J. Habakkuk, *American and British Technology in the 19th Century: The Search for Labour-Saving Inventions* (Cambridge [Eng]: University Press, 1962).

¹²² The uneven adoption of standardized parts production techniques in the United States is treated in Merritt Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977) and David A. Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

century. In manufacture, government had only a minor role. Manufacturing operations were generally family or partnership owned, and only a few received government-backed incorporation privileges. Private and public banks in the era offered short-term commercial loans by and large and did not support industrial ventures. Tariff policy remained inconsistent and contested, and, with the possible exception of iron and later steel production, no particular industrial trades owed their genesis or success to government protectionist policies.¹²³ Local judges during the early industrial period did make rulings that favored entrepreneurial activity, but even with this example, the place of government in American industrialization has to be deemed as minimal.¹²⁴ Early and later advocates of manufacture had called for state promotion of industry, but anti-mercantilist politics continued to blunt government initiatives. The country industrialized along various courses and without overall direction.

LABOR PROTEST IN THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD

Changes in old work arrangements and the harsh conditions of new factory work spurred protest among American working people during the antebellum period. No agitation occurred over the new machinery of the age. The U.S. witnessed fewer incidences of machine-breaking than was prevalent in Europe. In this country, machines did not displace workers, but filled a vacuum. Rather, the issue was the changing nature of social relations wrought by the spread of the wage labor system.

Protest first emerged in the artisan shops of the new republic.¹²⁵ Increased market activity and demand for manufactured goods at the turn of the 19th century forced changes in the organization of work in the craftshop. Enterprising master craftsmen soon opted to produce coarse goods. They were joined by merchants who gathered outworkers into new centralized shops. Both affected divisions of labor in their enterprises, hiring workers on a daily basis and assuming no other obligation to them than compensation for specific completed tasks. Change did not occur suddenly or evenly, but general transformations signaled an end to craft practices and customary relations between masters and their journeymen and apprentices.

Journeymen responded. At the turn of the 19th century, journeymen tailors, carpenters, and shoemakers launched isolated, short work stoppages to protest deteriorating conditions. They and other skilled workers began to transform fraternal societies they had formed into bargaining

¹²³ The limited significance of tariffs in early industrialization is treated in the following key article: Paul A. David, "Learning by Doing and Tariff Protection: A Reconsideration of the Case of the Ante-Bellum United States Textile Industry," *Journal of Economic History*, 30 (September 1970): 521-601.

¹²⁴ The role of the judiciary in economic development is treated controversially in Morton Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

¹²⁵ Artisan life and consciousness recently has received the significant attention of historians. Key studies include Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Howard Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic: The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: New York University Press, 1979); Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1800-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Charles Steffens, *The Mechanics of Baltimore: Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution, 1763-1812* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); William Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in 19th-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989); and Ronald Schultz, *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

agencies. The Federal Society of Cordwainers, established in Philadelphia in 1794, evolved into what is considered the nation's first bona fide trade union and conducted the first organized strike of American workingmen in 1799. Members of the same organization seven years later would be embroiled in the first legal trial in the U.S. involving the rights of union workers. The cordwainers were found guilty of conspiracy under common law, of concerted action to injure others and restrain trade. The defeat of the cordwainers in 1806 did not still the determination of journeymen to organize. The right of workingmen to form unions and collectively demand improvements in working conditions remained a hazy and disputed legal matter until federal protections were afforded workers in the 1930s. The cordwainers case, however, introduced the threat and actuality of judicial restraint to organized labor activity.

The nascent trade union movement faced greater economic obstacles than legal. Periodic economic downturns depleted membership and resources. Harmonies persisted between master craftsmen and their journeymen as both rallied under the banner of a small producers' democracy. Business expansion in the 1820s, however, brought new pressures to change old ways of production, and relations between masters and their charges ruptured anew. The decade would witness a vast surge in protest activity of craftshop workers.¹²⁶

Journeymen in Philadelphia led the way again. Organized shoemakers, carpenters, and other craft workers in the Quaker city formed the nation's first federated body of unions, the first labor newspaper, *The Mechanics' Free Press*, and first labor party, the Working Men's Party of Philadelphia. The movement spread. By the early 1830s, journeymen in such far-flung places as Brunswick, Maine, and Zanesville, Ohio, had revived or formed new unions as well as local federations, labor journals and workingmen's parties. The period saw numerous strikes—some general and large-scale—and labor political activism.

There are notable aspects to the protests of the men of the shops. The sites of their demonstrations were not individual firms, but whole trades, and, more important, the community at large. Craftsmen activists represented the poor treatment they now experienced at the hands of their masters-turned-manufacturers as a threat to republican ideals. Their party platforms called for the creation of free, common school systems of education as well as the abolition of debtors' prisons, prohibitions on chartered and licensed monopolies, and direct election of political authorities. At the workplace, they demanded the 10-hour workday and restrictions on the employment of non-apprenticed labor.

The burgeoning antebellum protest movement of journeymen proved short-lived. Internal squabbling over tactics and positions sapped the cause. Mainstream politicians easily absorbed their message, and an economic downturn starting in 1837 rendered a sharp blow. But most important, the ideology of the journeymen was exclusive. They valued craft labor and equal citizenship, but these were experiences only open to white men of skill and excluded women, African Americans, immigrants, common day laborers, and factory hands. Their inability to reach others through the expanding and diversified industrial work force blunted their efforts.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Material on labor activism in the 1820s and 1830s is contained in the above works, but also notably in Walter Hugins, *Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class: A Study of the New York Workingmen's Movement* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960) and Edward Pessen, *Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967).

¹²⁷ The exclusive nature of artisan ideology and the contribution of organized white workingmen to racial divisions in the antebellum period is well analyzed in David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the*

Labor protest also erupted in the new factories of the republic where factory workers did not wait for or need leadership from the urban craftshops. This history has an important twist: American wage-earning women cast the story of the first demonstrations of American industrial workers.¹²⁸

The hope had been that harmony would prevail in the textile city of Lowell, Massachusetts, but events did not unfold according to plan. Boardinghouses intended as wholesome environments for young women recruited from the countryside to work in the mills proved to be perfect centers for organizing protest. The mills themselves served as places to build labor solidarity. Increased competition in the industry in the 1830s forced mill owners to reduce costs by lowering wages, lengthening the workday, speeding the machinery, and increasing work assignments. The stage was set for conflict. Rumors of wage reductions in February 1834 brought the first protest as 800 women walked out. Two years later, announced increases in room and board charged by the companies generated a work stoppage of close to 3,000 female operatives. In both cases, massive street rallies and demonstrations were held, the kind not seen in New England since the American Revolution. In the 1840s, Lowell's female mill workers spearheaded a region-wide petition to pressure government for 10-hour workday legislation.

Women shoemakers in Lynn, Massachusetts, picked up the gauntlet. Women stitching leathers at home on an outwork basis remained isolated, but this did not prevent them from organizing in the early 1830s to demand uniform piece-rate schedules and better pay. Protest in Lynn, however, was shaped by the very uneven industrialization of shoemaking. Men working in centralized shops formed a union in the 1840s, but invited the women working at home to join them only on an auxiliary basis. Meanwhile, young, unmarried female factory hands also began to organize in the 1850s, but found their demands often at cross-purposes with both the men and the older women domestic outworkers. Skill, gender, and location divides did not prevent an industry-wide strike involving more than 10,000 shoemakers to unfold in February of 1860—the largest labor protest of the early industrial period—but these divisions contributed to the strike's demise.

The early industrial period saw great labor organizing and strife—the wage labor and factory systems brought resistance—but the protest was episodic. The vicissitudes of the economy greatly affected labor organizing during the era. Skill, gender, and ethnic divides took their toll. Labor ideology of the day that both fueled and moderated grievance upheld the views of a mutualistic, small producer's republic, not the views or circumstances of all working people. Most important, the unevenness of industrial development impeded a larger, uniform response.

American Working Class (New York: Verso, 1991).

¹²⁸ The protests of industrial workers in the 1830s and 1840s, particularly of women workers is vividly rendered in Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Mary Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); and David Zonderman, *Aspirations and Anxieties: New England Workers and the Mechanized Factory System, 1815-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

AN INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND

By the Civil War, the U.S. had made great strides in manufacture. Still the country lagged behind Great Britain, France, and Germany in industrial output. The decades after the war's end witnessed an unprecedented expansion. By the turn of the 20th century, industrial production in the U.S. would surpass the combined manufacture of its three main rivals. Between 1860 and 1900, manufacturing output increased five-fold, growing from 32 percent to 53 percent of the nation's gross product, and the industrial work force expanded from 1.5 to 5.9 million workers.¹²⁹

The story of American industrialization in the late 19th century is one of extensive growth. While gains in productivity occurred with new technologies, most of the growth in manufacture of the period can be attributed simply to more firms and more people producing more goods. A critical ingredient in this expansion was the geographical spread of enterprise that built a wide and remarkable belt of industry through New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and most notably for the era, the Midwest.

New York City, Philadelphia, and Newark, New Jersey, remained dominant manufacturing centers in the late 19th century. Diversified products and work settings, specialization in products and processes, and small-to-medium sized, family-owned and operated firms continued as hallmarks of industry in the metropolis. Garment sweatshops and larger apparel works were particularly prominent as sites of increased labor conflict and unionizing, and grist for social reformers who petitioned for the government regulation of working conditions.¹³⁰

A line of new industrial cities that paralleled the Atlantic Coast joined the great eastern manufacturing centers. Wilmington, Delaware, for example, prospered after the Civil War in shipbuilding, railroad car construction, carriage making, and, most important, leather tanning. Further north, Trenton, New Jersey, became famed for iron and steel, wire cable and ceramic goods (dishes as well as sanitary ware—sinks, tubs, and toilets). Paterson, New Jersey, had been slated for industrial prominence since the days of Alexander Hamilton and SUM. Little came of that venture, but, by the time of the Civil War, the city housed successful locomotive works and cotton mills. After the Civil War, Paterson would thrive as "Silk City," the leading center of silk textile production in the U.S. Nearby Passaic would emerge as a woolen textile center.¹³¹

Further north, the city of Bridgeport sat at the base of an important valley of industry. North of the city, a band of towns appeared around Waterbury, which served as the capital of brass and brass product manufacture in the U.S. The area also led in clock and watch manufacture. Bridgeport itself became famous for the production of specialized metal goods, particularly

¹²⁹ Figures comparing the industrial records of Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States in the later 19th century are drawn from Walt Whitman Rostow, *The World Economy: History and Prospect* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978).

¹³⁰ On work in the garment trades, particularly for women, in such cities as New York and Philadelphia, see Joan Jensen and Sue Davidson, eds., *A Needle, A Bobbin, A Strike!: Women Needleworkers in America* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1984).

¹³¹ On the new industrial cities in the Middle Atlantic coastal region, see: Carol E. Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware: Portrait of an Industrial City, 1830-1910*, (published for the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation by the University Press of Virginia, 1974); John Cumber, *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Workers in Trenton* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989); and Philip Scranton, ed., *Silk City: Studies on the Paterson Silk Industry, 1860-1940* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1985).

machine tools, rifles, and ammunition casings. Furthest east, Providence, Rhode Island, emerged as a proud center of manufacture. Tools, steam engines, jewelry, and silverware fashioned in Providence factories were respected around the world.¹³²

Greater New England remained a textile center with large, fully integrated facilities as well as a few surviving mill villages. Lowell, Massachusetts, however, became dwarfed by new textile cities in the region. Just to the east, Lawrence, Massachusetts, grew in woolens production and would house three of the four largest textile mills in the country. The largest would be found north of Lowell in Manchester, New Hampshire, where Boston investors created the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, a massive enterprise of 30 buildings with 17,000 employees by the turn of the 20th century. South of Lowell would appear another rival, Fall River, Massachusetts, a city that featured steam-engine powered mills that utilized the latest automated technologies. Serious labor disputes marked Fall River as skilled operatives resisted the new regimen. Smaller textile centers, such as Woonsocket, Rhode Island, joined the fold. North of Connecticut, textile manufacture still dominated in New England. There was the exception of Lynn, Massachusetts, still the nation's leading shoemaking city; and in the late 19th century, Worcester, Massachusetts, emerged as a major diversified manufacturing city with a notable metal trades industry.¹³³

New manufacturing cities joined the old along the eastern seaboard. To the west, at the same time, a new and impressive industrial heartland opened across upstate New York along a 350-mile corridor that embraced the Erie Canal. Iron and manufacturing centers appeared in Albany and Troy, locomotive works and electrical goods manufacturing in Schenectady, textile and garment production in Utica, copper production in Rome; garments, shoemaking, and photographic equipment in Rochester; and iron and steel production in Buffalo. Across the lower tier of New York similarly appeared centers for shoemaking, glassblowing, and railroad car construction.¹³⁴

¹³² For new industrial cities along coastal New England, see: Cecilia Bucki, "Dilution and Craft Tradition: Munitions Workers in Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1915-1919" in Hebert G. Gutman and Donald H. Bell, eds., *The New England Working Class and the New Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Jeremy Brecher et al., *Brass Valley: The Story of Working People's Lives and Struggles in an American Industrial Region* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and Judith E. Smith, *Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900-1940* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).

¹³³ The textile centers of New England in the late 19th century are treated in the following studies: Donald B. Cole, *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963); Ardis Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John Cumbler, *Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For Lynn, Massachusetts, see Mary Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); and Worcester, Massachusetts, Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For what We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹³⁴ Economic and social life in industrial cities along the Erie Canal in upstate New York are pictured in such works as Daniel Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Brian Greenberg, *Worker and Community: Response to Industrialization in a 19th-Century American City, Albany, New York, 1850-1884* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985); Carole Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City: Gender, Class, and Community in Troy, New*

Throughout the 19th century, Pennsylvania remained the leading industrial state in the nation both in terms of output and production. A line of industrial cities emerged west of Philadelphia, with Reading as a machine shop and textile town, and Harrisburg and Johnstown as iron and steel production centers. But it was in the far west of the state that Pittsburgh emerged as an industrial colossus. By the onset of the Civil War, Pittsburgh had already become the leading glass producing center in the country. In the last decades of the century, the city's great new fame would be based on iron and steel manufacture that accounted for one-sixth of the nation's iron and steel output. Pittsburgh's steel plants would also serve as sites for key battles of the age between capital and labor.¹³⁵

Ohio is viewed as an agriculture state, but, in the late 19th century, Ohio was awash with industry. In 1880, 60 percent of the state's working population was employed in its widespread manufactories. Major industrial cities dominated the view. Cincinnati was a diversified manufacturing center famed for furniture, wagons, coffins, plug tobacco, boots, shoes, clothing, and meat processing and soap. Cleveland came to rival Buffalo and Pittsburgh as an iron and steel producing giant. Yet Cincinnati and Cleveland were joined by a host of smaller industrial cities, many diversified but also known for particular goods: Canton and watches, Springfield and agriculture machinery, Youngstown and Akron and rubber, Toledo and steel, Dayton and office machinery, and East Liverpool and pottery.¹³⁶

The path of industry in the late 19th century passed widely through Ohio, but skipped largely over Indiana (in the 20th century, the state would see the building of massive steel works in Gary and electrical works in Fort Wayne). Detroit, Michigan, appeared as a diversified manufacturing center and joined Pittsburgh as an industrial giant when the city became the world's capital for automobile manufacture after the turn of the century.¹³⁷ Before 1900, Grand Rapids, Michigan, overshadowed Detroit as an industrial center as the leading furniture producing center in the country.

Further west, Milwaukee achieved fame in beer making, and places such as Davenport, Iowa, and Moline, Illinois, in the manufacture of farm machinery. But dominating the industrial map at the western end of America's new belt of industry was Chicago, a city like Pittsburgh that epitomized the country's ascendance in manufacture after the Civil War. Economic activity in

York, 1864-86 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); and Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

¹³⁵ Gerald Eggert, *Harrisburg Industrializes: The Coming of Factories to an American Community* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) offers a detailed portrait of a medium-size industrial city in south central Pennsylvania. Key works on Pittsburgh, the steel industry and social life and conflict in this American industrial colossus include: David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); Frank G. Couvares, *The Remaking of Pittsburgh: Class and Culture in an Industrializing City, 1877-1919* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); and Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture and Steel* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992).

¹³⁶ The spread of industry through Ohio is well portrayed in Raymond Boryczka and Lorin Lee Cary, *No Strength Without Union: An Illustrated History of Ohio Workers, 1803-1980* (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1982). An excellent study of industrialization in Cincinnati is Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788-1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

¹³⁷ For Detroit, see Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) and Richard Oestreicher, *Solidarity and Fragmentation: Working People and Class Consciousness in Detroit, 1875-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

Chicago centered on receiving processing and marketing plant and animal resources from the city's vast and bountiful hinterland and in providing services for rural neighbors, near and far.¹³⁸ Industry in Chicago initially involved processing Midwest and West land and forest products: lumber and flour milling, tanning, soapmaking, and meatpacking. In the later 1860s, Chicago's meatpackers invested millions of dollars in building large, mechanized packing houses to facilitate a mass slaughter of pigs and cows and meat cutting never before contemplated. Tens of thousands of workers were employed along the de-assembly lines of what became Chicago's notorious stockyards.

In the late 19th century, new industries appeared in Chicago not directly related to the processing of agricultural goods. Nearby iron and coal reserves allowed the city to emerge as an iron and steel-producing rival to Pittsburgh. Large, centralized clothing factories appeared (several to be the sites of key strikes of garment workers in the first decades of the 20th century). Chicago housed the mammoth McCormick Reaper Works, the largest producer of farm equipment in the world. A strike of McCormick workers in May of 1886 played a role in the famous Haymarket Square bombing and riot.

Chicago anchored the western end of a wide swath of industry that covered New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and the Midwest. The South remained largely outside the history of American industrialization. The postbellum period saw significant increases in textile production, with mill villages populated by poor white farm families sprouting in the Piedmont—an area stretching from southern Virginia through central North and South Carolina and into northern Georgia and Alabama. Birmingham, Alabama, emerged as an iron and steel processing center.¹³⁹ Still, by 1900 with 30 percent of the nation's population, the South contributed less than 10 percent of the country's industrial output. Limited southern industrialization was due to a late start in industry, control by Northerners of critical investments, poor technological wherewithal, the continuing pull of cotton agriculture, the racial politics of the region, the area's low wage base and little incentives to substitute capital for labor, and the reluctance of landowning and commercial elites to see the formation of a potentially rebellious industrial work force.¹⁴⁰

Three aspects of Northeast and Midwest industrial development deserve mention. First, the array of goods that flowed from American manufactories must be appreciated. Scholars stress the emergence of capital goods industries in the period, a development that marks postbellum industrialization. Steel production and machine building assumed a great place in American manufacture in the later period, yet it is product diversity that demands emphasis. Americans produced clothing, ceramics, jewelry, and beer in profusion.

¹³⁸ The literature on Chicago is voluminous; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991) is a later comprehensive work that analyzes Chicago's pivotal role in greater midwest and western development.

¹³⁹ An overview of industrialization in the south after the Civil War is provided in James C. Cobb, *Industrialization & Southern Society, 1877-1984* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1984). Textile mill building in the Piedmont region is described in David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982). For developments in Birmingham, Alabama, see Carl V. Harris, *Political Power in Birmingham, 1871-1921* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977).

¹⁴⁰ The role of southern elites in limiting economic development in the region is discussed and debated in Jonathan Weiner et al., "Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865-1955" *American Historical Review*, 84 (October 1979): 970-1006; and Steven Hahn, "Class and State in Postemancipation Societies: Southern Planters in Comparative Perspective," *American Historical Review*, 95 (February 1990): 75-98.

Second, the contribution of America's smaller industrial cities should be noted. Attention focuses on larger cities like Pittsburgh and Chicago. But an important aspect of America's great leap in manufacture in the last decades of the 19th century is the production that occurred in the nation's seeming nooks and crannies. Fine, diverse, and plentiful products sprang forth from the shops and factories of places such as Zaneville, Ohio, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. In fact, half of the industrial work force of the period resided and labored in such cities.¹⁴¹

Lastly, immigration played a critical role in the great manufacturing expansion of the post-Civil War era. With fertility declines in the 19th century, immigration represented the prime means of population growth and served to boost demand for manufactured goods. Increases in output in the period can be directly correlated to population increases. American immigrants provided labor for an expanding American industry. By 1900, 85 percent of the nation's industrial work force were foreign-born workers and their children. For example, a succession of Irish, English, French Canadian, Polish, Portuguese, Greek, Italian, and Russian newcomers came to staff New England's textile mills. But the contribution of immigrants was not just in their numbers. Immigrants added expertise. Skilled immigrant workers continued to transfer technical knowledge and ability from Europe to the U.S.—English and French silk weavers and northern Italian silk dyers in Paterson, New Jersey, German cutlery makers in Philadelphia, or English brass workers in Waterbury, Connecticut.¹⁴²

LARGE-SCALE ENTERPRISE

The geographical spread of industry represents one notable feature of late 19th century industrialization. The emergence of large-scale industrial works in the period is another. The typical manufacturing enterprise in 1860 was small, family-owned and operated (perhaps a partnership), specialized, labor intensive, and a producer of small batches of goods sold in local and regional markets. The classic proprietorship persisted and proliferated in small town and metropolitan America and contributed to the country's industrial success. By 1900, however, another kind of manufacturing business dominated the landscape. These large, corporately owned, bureaucratically managed, multifunctional, and capital intensive enterprises marketed mass-produced items nationally and even internationally.

Several factors contributed to the rise of large industrial works in the late 19th century.¹⁴³ Expanding railroad construction and operations created a national marketplace. Specialized firms survived by catering to niche markets, but producers of more standardized goods encountered stiff competition and could not function in isolation. Competition drove

¹⁴¹ On the geography of late 19th-century industrialization and the importance of middle range cities, see David R. Meyer, "Midwestern Industrialization and the American Manufacturing Belt in the 19th Century," *Journal of Economic History*, 49 (December 1989): 921-937.

¹⁴² The role of immigration in late 19th-century industrialization is treated in Herbert Gutman and Ira Berlin, "Class Composition and the Development of the American Working Class, 1840-1890," in Herbert Gutman, *Power & Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1987).

¹⁴³ The brief overview of the rise of large-scale industrial enterprise in the late 19th century is largely based on the important work of the business historian, Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. Chandler's key studies include: *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of Industrial Enterprise* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962); *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1977); and *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1990).

manufacturing firms to attend to new activities—accessing raw materials and deliberate product marketing. They grew vertically. Companies also met the challenge of competition by trying to reach agreement with their rivals—to carve up market spheres and set floors on prices. This initially took the form of private accords, but renewed competition demanded more formal arrangements: trade association pacts, holding companies and trusts. When all else failed—when competition within trades could not be curbed through associational activity—there was the last resort to merge to buy out firms and create huge conglomerated enterprises. Thus, firms also grew horizontally.

More than market forces existed to drive firm expansion. Ironically, anti-monopoly politics contributed to the merger movement. State and federal outlawing of collusive business practices made merger a necessary alternative. In Europe, for example, private pacts among firms controlling competition received legal sanction; cartels of companies emerged, rather than merged.¹⁴⁴ Encouraging the merger process in the U.S. were financial capitalists, investment bankers who raised capital for manufacturers seeking facility expansion. These capitalists convened the parties to potential mergers and then marketed the securities of the new conglomerated concerns. All these services were rendered, of course, for handsome fees.¹⁴⁵

Technical considerations played a role in firm expansion. Large-scale enterprises tended to prevail in industries where standardized goods were produced, where machines could easily replace hand labor, and economies of scale and through processing were achievable. Examples of these enterprises include petroleum, plant oil, chemical, sugar, alcohol distilling and refining, iron, steel, cooper, aluminum manufacture, grain, and tobacco processing. Large-scale companies typically did not appear or succeed in apparels, textiles, shoes, lumber, furniture, leather, machine tools, and printing. Changing, small-batch, custom orders dominated in these trades and were not well handled in the large firm setting.

Finally, there was a managerial side to the rise of big business. Many large-scale manufacturing enterprises formed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries failed—National Cordage, Consolidated Tire, and many others entered the dustbin of history. Financiers had no intentions of establishing and managing going concerns, but rather aimed at immediate killings in the stock market. Technology created the potential for bona fide large-scale enterprises to succeed, but still great managerial acumen was required. Hidden in the story of the emergence of large industrial concerns is the work of a new managerial class who developed—through a good deal of trial and error—effective sales strategies, appropriate organizational schemes, production systems, accounting procedures, company rules and regulation, and feedback and forecasting methods that made the new behemoths run smoothly.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ For the complex legal history surrounding the rise of the corporation and how antimonopoly politics spurred mergers, see Herbert Hovenkamp, *Enterprise and American Law, 1836-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991) and Tony Freyer, *Regulating Big Business: Antitrust in Great Britain and America, 1880-1990* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). An important study that emphasizes the role of the depression of 1893 and other contingencies in the emergence of the corporation is Naomi R. Lamoreaux, *The Great Merger Movement in American Business, 1895-1904* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁵ The critical role of finance capitalists in the rise of big business is stressed in Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

¹⁴⁶ The role of appointed managers in sustaining the corporations is the major theme of Alfred Chandler's *The*

The emergence of large-scale enterprises in the late 19th century entailed a complicated history. Whatever the causes, the rise of big business had enormous impact on the American people. The corporation represented a great threat to visions held of the U.S. as a nation of hearty and independent producers and citizens—a greater threat than in the earlier spread of market activity and the wage labor system. The last decades of the 19th century and the first of the 20th century brought notable protest against the economic and political power of the corporation and subsequently a modicum of governmental regulation of business. As noted, antitrust legislation had the effect of furthering mergers and soon corporate executives recognized that they could shape regulatory legislation to their own needs to curb competition and achieve market stability.

The corporation figured in the great labor battles of the period. The last decades of the 19th century witnessed unprecedented strike activity with federal authorities recording more than 1,000 strikes engaging 200,000 workers annually on average.¹⁴⁷ As social historians have recently emphasized, work stoppages in the era involved whole communities. Community members from all walks of life rallied and rioted with striking workers to protest the hard times that occurred with the frequent economic downturns of the age, the exploitative employment practices of particular firms, and the general threat that the corporation represented to cherished republican ideals.¹⁴⁸

The rise of large-scale industrial enterprises presented specific challenges to carrying out work. In an earlier age, workers were motivated by personal relations with owners of small manufactories and the dream of working hard and becoming an independent producer. The imperatives of the new corporate-owned, bureaucrat-managed firms were at odds with the sensibilities of working people. Tensions flared, and labor conflict in the late 19th century set off intense searches for new means of engineering diligence and loyalty at the workplace.

RESTRUCTURING THE AMERICAN SHOP FLOOR

The attempt to secure labor peace in large-scale industry involved numerous and varied initiatives. Wresting control of production from the hands of skilled mechanics loomed as one vital goal, as did the development of new organizational incentives for all workers. Firms experimented with a mix of strategies, but often only with partial success. In spite of all the efforts at managerial regulation, conflict persisted. The following represents the major kinds of initiatives.

Embedding Control of Production in Machinery

Industrialization may have spelled an end—a slow end—to the artisan shop, but it did not diminish the need for skilled labor. In many large-scale industries, skilled workers supervised

Visible Hand.

¹⁴⁷ The most comprehensive analysis of strike statistics for the late 19th century is afforded in P. K. Edwards, *Strikes in the United States, 1881-1974* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

¹⁴⁸ The historian Herbert Gutman spent his scholarly lifetime providing evidence and understanding of the community nature of labor strife. His key essays are anthologized in Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Knopf, 1976) and *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1987).

teams of men they directly hired.¹⁴⁹ The iron and steel industry provides a classic case. In the 1870s and 1880s in the typical Pittsburgh iron and steel mill, skilled puddlers oversaw the difficult mixing and heating of the ores and fuels; rollers formed molten iron into ingots, sheets and rails; molders prepared casts; and forgers hammered large components into shape. Mill owners reached per-ton and per-piece agreements with the skilled men—rates sliding with the prices the owners could fetch in the marketplace—and as these industrial craftsmen organized into unions, arrangements became negotiated on a collective basis.

As competition increased in the last decades of the 19th century, pressure emerged to end the rule of the skilled men and to replace them with automated technologies. With the adoption of Bessemer converters, open-hearth furnaces, and new instrumentation, plant managers eliminated the need for the all-important puddlers. Continuous rolling machines displaced the labor of the highly skilled rollers and new mechanical mixers, ladles, hammers, cranes, and trolleys further reduced skill demands. The greater mechanization of iron and steel making did not occur without difficulty or opposition. Technical innovation first required defeat of the well-organized craft unions in the trade. The Homestead Strike of 1892, a monumental labor battle of the era, represented a culminating victory of management over the skilled men and critically diminished their reign in iron and steel production. The new technologies entailed enormous financial investments and their adoption often necessitated the pooling of resources. In this way, labor conflict contributed to the merger movement.¹⁵⁰

The products of iron and steel making varied too greatly for there to be a continuous production process. Managers in the industry were unable to completely embed control of manufacture in machinery. That absolute dream awaited executives in the new automobile industry, and the key figure here is Henry Ford.¹⁵¹ In the first years of the 20th century, Ford was among a number of small-scale producers of cars. In his workshop, skilled men working in teams assembled cars from components manufactured by a host of parts suppliers. Ford determined that a market existed for cheap standardized cars, and he moved toward mass production. He first recognized that a more efficient assembling of cars—and one not relying on skilled fitters—required precision made parts. He assumed control over the manufacture of components, innovating with new precision machinery and measuring devices. In addition, he began assembly-line production of larger components with the well-honed smaller elements that he could now produce.

With innovations in parts production, Ford then decided to extend the assembly-line principle to the actual building of cars. In 1910, he opened his revolutionary Highland Park plant on the outskirts of Detroit, Michigan. The plant included areas for assembly-line parts production and

¹⁴⁹ The persisting controls on production exerted by skilled industrial workers is discussed in David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge [Eng]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).

¹⁵⁰ The place of labor unrest in the rise of big business is highlighted in James Livingston, "The Social Analysis of Economic History and Theory: Conjectures on Late 19th-Century American Development," *American Historical Review*, 92 (February 1987): 69-95.

¹⁵¹ A large scholarly literature exists on Henry Ford and his innovations with moving assembly lines in automobile manufacture. Some works include: Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932*; and Nelson Lichtenstein and Stephen Meyer, eds., *On the Line: Essays in the History of Auto Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

what would be the famed moving assembly line along which tens of thousands of mass production workers toiled, tediously attaching separate pieces to Ford's model T car.

Ford's system, however, did not work as flawlessly as intended (all the publicity it received withstanding). By the late 1920s, Ford's standardized production methods proved an impediment. General Motors, a new conglomerate of automotive firms, surpassed Ford with a revolutionary sales strategy that emphasized varied and changing car styles. GM's ploy required a more flexible production system than at Ford, using more all-purpose than specialized machinery and relying more on skilled labor. Ford adjusted to the challenge only slowly.

The Ford assembly line provided unbearable work. The company experienced extreme labor turnover—in the 400 percent range in the 1910s. To achieve greater stability, Ford launched a number of benevolent programs. The most famous was the Five Dollar A Day plan announced in 1914, which offered, for then, the very high wage of \$5 a day to loyal employees. To be eligible, workers and their families first had to be screened to determine whether they were worthy members of the community. In later years, Ford tried other schemes, including the recruitment of African-American workers through local black churches, but all of the company's benevolence was matched by vehement anti-unionism.

Embedding control of production in technology offered no guarantees. It was not always feasible technically or good for sales. Machinery setting the pace of production also did not always bring labor under management's thumb. Ford workers literally walked off their jobs in great numbers. As executives in the car industry would learn in the 1930s, it did not take much for workers to flip the electrical switches off and halt the machinery and assembly lines.

Embedding Control of Production in Detailed Divisions of Labor

Division of labor had been a hallmark of industrialization from the outset. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, division of labor in manufacture became a religion. The chief proselytizer was Frederick Winslow Taylor.¹⁵² Taylor was born in Philadelphia in 1856 in comfortable surroundings. Instead of pursuing a college education as his parents had expected, he became a machinist's apprentice and later a foreman at the Midvale Steel Company in his native city. At Midvale, Taylor began a series of experiments aimed at increasing the efficiency of the flow of goods through the productive process and the productivity of the workers employed there—worker's control over the pace of production at Midvale particularly aggrieved him. Although he introduced a range of managerial reforms, Taylor is most famous for his time-and-motion studies, his effort at breaking work into detailed, easily supervised tasks, cataloguing them, establishing time rates for finishing jobs, and structuring pay incentive schemes to boost output.

Taylor moved from Midvale to serve as a consultant to many manufacturing firms—particularly in the metal trades—and with his disciples and competitors formed the “scientific management” movement. Taylor attended to the use of machinery, but for him the great potential for control of production lay not in hard technology but in systems of compensation. Taylor and others have been seen as critical agents in the restructuring of the American industrial shop floor and work in

¹⁵² Frederick Winslow Taylor's life and career and the limited impact of scientific management is stressed in Daniel Nelson, *Frederick W. Taylor and the Rise of Scientific Management* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) and Daniel Nelson, ed., *A Mental Revolution: Scientific Management since Taylor* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992).

general, yet the historical record reveals that proponents of scientific management rarely succeeded in setting their innovations in place. Resistance from foremen who were threatened by the new consultants, more notable resistance from workers, and the administrative nightmare involved in cataloguing tasks and establishing rates—especially in firms where product lines were always changing—doomed Tayloristic experiments from the start. Taylorism was also often adopted with other strategies of labor control, benevolent schemes, for example, which Taylor would have frowned on. His mechanistic sense of human psychology would be rejected by a later generation of personnel consultants. Taylorism was just a part of a much larger and multifaceted story.

The Defeat of Industrial Craft Unions

Direct assaults on the shop floor rule of skilled workers represented a third managerial strategy. That meant refusing further to deal with industrial craft unions and abrogating existing agreements on work rules and pay scales. For plant owners seeking to achieve controls on production through automated technologies or detailed divisions of labor, defeating the associations of skilled workers became a top priority.

In the late 1880s, executives in the iron and steel industry made significant headway in expunging the powerful Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers from plants. The Amalgamated remained strong in one key facility, the Homestead works just outside of Pittsburgh, owned by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie and his partner and general manager, Henry Frick, determined to deal the union a fatal blow, a decision with legendary consequences.¹⁵³

In late June of 1892, Frick announced an end to dealings with the union. He ordered the building of fortifications around the Homestead plant, instructing guards not to allow Amalgamated men into the facility. To protect newly-hired nonunion men, Frick needed greater protection, and this set the stage for a pitched battle. On July 6, 300 private police from the Pinkerton Detective Agency arrived by water near the Homestead plant on covered barges. Workers locked-out of employment attacked the invaders, pelting them with stones, bricks and gunfire. For hours, defiant steelworkers and the Pinkertons exchanged shots. An armistice was eventually arranged, and the private police force allowed to land, but not before nine steelworkers and seven Pinkertons lay dead. The Pennsylvania state militia soon arrived to restore order, but also to allow Frick to hire more nonunion men. By the fall of 1892, Carnegie and Frick resumed full production, and the strike was lost. The expulsion of the union from Homestead allowed the steel managers to gain further controls over production with new technologies and the hiring now of a seemingly more placable labor force of semi- and unskilled workers of immigrant background. Bitterness, however, would prevail in the community of Homestead for decades.

The attempt to defeat the unions of skilled industrial workers figured indirectly in another legendary labor upheaval of the period. In the early 1880s, Cyrus McCormick, Jr., assumed leadership of the McCormick Reaper Works, and he was determined to end the craft system of producing farm equipment maintained by his father. He sought to replace the skilled and well-organized molders, blacksmiths, machinists, and woodworkers who fashioned the machines. In

¹⁵³ The most comprehensive history of the famed Homestead Strike of 1892 is provided in Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1992).

the mid-1880s, he introduced new technologies to the McCormick plant in Chicago, which displaced a core of skilled men, and in February of 1886 he declared the works an open shop and fired all the remaining union workers. Demonstrations ensued, the conflict turning violent as fighting broke out between former employees and Pinkerton guards brought in to protect newly hired replacements.

On May 3, protesting workers at McCormick received assistance from other groups of workers in Chicago who were mobilizing on behalf of the eight-hour workday. Chicago police fixed on breaking this latest protest waded into the crowd, shooting and killing four demonstrators. A protest meeting was called for that night at Haymarket Square. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people attended what at first was a peaceful gathering, but, as they later dispersed, a bomb exploded in the midst of a contingent of policemen. Eight officers were killed and as other police responded with gunfire, blood flowed in the streets of Chicago—with eight workers killed and upwards of 50 wounded.

The Haymarket bombing reverberated throughout the nation. A sensational trial followed in which eight members of what were deemed radical organizations were prosecuted and found guilty of conspiracy in placing the bomb (six of the eight actually could not even be placed at the scene). Their conviction and the subsequent hanging of four of them produced great protest. The Haymarket tragedy had the deleterious effect for the trade union movement of having labor organizing identified in the public mind with radicalism and incendiarism.¹⁵⁴

With managers ultimately prevailing in dramatic and symbolic confrontations at McCormick and Homestead, the campaign against the unions of skilled industrial workers spread. After failing to reach accommodations with well organized molders and machinists, executives in the metal and machine trades in the first decades of the 20th century successfully moved to rid their industry of union presence. The once strong associations of molders and machinists would not be heard from for another generation. A key element then in the transformation of the American shop floor after 1880 included direct attacks on industrial craft unions.¹⁵⁵

Increased Supervision

New technologies and diminishing dependency on skilled workers did not guarantee increased productivity in large-scale manufactories. Unskilled and semiskilled mass production workers, who now composed a greater part of the industrial work force, needed overseeing, and the first decades of the 20th century witnessed a doubling in the ratio of supervisors to employees in American industry. Supervision became more specialized.

Owners of industrial facilities in the mid- and late 19th century left the management of their enterprises to others—at times to teams of skilled workers, but more often to shop floor superintendents. In some instances, these bosses ruled as so-called inside contractors—they signed agreements with the owners to produce specified lots of goods and hired their own labor;

¹⁵⁴ The events surrounding the Haymarket Square bombing of May 1886 are described in Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁵⁵ The attack on skilled workers and their unions is best described and analyzed in David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

in other cases, they served as salaried bureaucrats of the firms.¹⁵⁶ Whatever the particular nature of their employment, factory foremen received, assumed, and exerted great power at the workplace.

The capricious governance of the foremen—their nepotism, petty extortions, and arbitrary decision-making—generated grievances among workers and was a significant cause of strikes in the late 19th century. In the name of fairness and security, workers sought to install union work rules during the era to counter the discriminatory actions of their supervisors. The foremen presented problems to higher-level executives, who sought to rationalize operations. The supervisors fomented labor conflict and often blocked reform. An answer for these troubles for top management lay in curbing the generalized rule of the foremen and their training and specialization. Changes in shop floor practice at the turn of the century entailed changes in supervision. The number of foremen grew, and their tasks became more detailed (Taylorized, in effect).¹⁵⁷

Molding the Labor Force

Another strategy for achieving labor control in large-scale enterprises involved shaping the character of the work force. This could first entail deliberate screening in the hiring process. Employers in the metal trades, for example, in the first decades of the 20th century, jointly formed recruitment bureaus to weed out known and potential union activists.¹⁵⁸ More subtle kinds of employment practices emerged during and after World War I. Partially to deal with labor shortages caused by high turnover and military conscription, manufacturing companies established new personnel departments to systematize hiring (and take the hiring function out of the hands of foremen). Personnel officers began experimenting with reference and testing procedures to measure aptitudes and personal traits of applicants. The goal was to assemble a capable and compliant work force and match workers to specific jobs based on assumed abilities and temperaments.¹⁵⁹

The growing immigrant segment of the labor force posed particular problems for managers of large industrial works. In the first decades of the 20th century, firm officials assumed the task of "Americanizing" foreign-born recruits, shaping the newcomers ostensibly into hard toiling, non-radical American workers. To that end, manufacturing firms such as U.S. Steel and McCormick implemented so-called Americanization programs, which included factory classes in English language and civics. As with testing plans, these new initiatives had a greater impact in encasing personnel officers into the bureaucracies than in remolding the beliefs and habits of immigrant workers.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ The practice of inside subcontracting in factories is treated in John Buttrick, "The Inside Contract System," *Journal of Economic History*, 12 (summer 1952): 205-221.

¹⁵⁷ The changing place of foremen in the factory is discussed in Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).

¹⁵⁸ Walter Licht, *Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840-1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 178-181.

¹⁵⁹ For the role of new personnel officers, see Nelson, *Managers and Workers*, and Sanford Jacoby, *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unions and the Transformation of Work in American Industry, 1900-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

¹⁶⁰ A classic study of Americanization Plans is Gerd Korman, *Industrialization, Immigrants and Americanizers: The View from Milwaukee, 1866-1921* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967).

A final effort in forging a work force better accommodated to the new corporate order involved systematizing the internal flow of labor within firms. To boost the loyalty of workers, managers of large-scale enterprises created intricate career ladders. If independent producership no longer was the reward for tireless service to one's employer, then upward mobility within the organization was now held out to the assiduous. Workers, however, could not hope to rise to any and all positions. Separate tracks were created for manual, clerical, technical, and upper managerial ranks. Internal mobility and segmentation of labor within companies became dual features of large-scale industry in the first decades of the 20th century. Still, the effort to build organizational incentives to encourage hard work illustrates that corporate managers at the dawn of the corporation tried both "carrot" and "stick" approaches to labor control.

Positive Incentives

Replacing workers with technology, routinization of tasks, breaking the unions of skilled workers, greater superintendency, and controlling recruitment represented only one side of the story of the transforming of the American shop floor. The period 1880 to 1930 also witnessed endless attempts to effect labor peace through the building of good will between managers and workers. In many respects, this represents a continuity of practice. Samuel Slater and Francis Cabot Lowell early in the 19th century, for example, had attempted to create wholesome environments for textile workers, and they offer the first examples of industrial capitalist benevolence (and of this shortsightedness and failure). Building model company towns remained an ideal late into the century, and one famous case provided the initial site of another monumental labor battle of the age of corporate ascendancy.

George Pullman achieved prominence in the 1870s for the manufacture of his sumptuous railway sleeping and dining cars. He attracted attention for creating in the 1880s a seemingly model community in south Chicago for families of the men who labored in his shops fabricating Pullman cars. Harmony in his well-landscaped and complete company town, though, was just an appearance.¹⁶¹

In June of 1894, Pullman announced a reduction in wages due to a severe economic downturn that had begun a year earlier. Employees of the company walked off their jobs in protest. Pullman had refused to lower rents in the already high cost lodging that he provided his workers, so the wage cuts represented a serious hardship. Pullman reacted to the strike by closing down the plant, content to draw revenue from the leasing of existing Pullman cars.

Soon faced with eviction and under increasing economic duress, Pullman workers appealed for assistance to the American Railway Union (ARU) and its young charismatic leader, Eugene Victor Debs. Debs warily agreed to help and, in support of the Pullman strikers, he called on ARU men to refuse to operate trains with Pullman cars. Thus began the Pullman boycott of early July 1894, a job action that would bring the nation's rail traffic and commerce to a halt. The Pullman strike and boycott was marked by dramatic events that garnered worldwide attention: fighting between workers and police, the use of federal troops and injunctions to stem the insurrection, the jailing of key leaders, and ultimately the defeat of the Pullman workers. The

¹⁶¹ The community established by George Pullman is described in Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) and the standard history of the Pullman strike and boycott remains Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: The Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Upheaval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

loss of the strike had a sobering effect on the labor movement and gave weight to leaders such as Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, who advocated greater caution. The Pullman upheaval convinced business leaders of the folly and costliness of trying to engender labor loyalty and diligence by building model company towns. The events of July 1894, however, did not stop manufacturers from seeking peace on the shop floor through other benevolent means.

A new paternalist approach emerged at the turn of the 20th century that involved specific programs. Corporate leaders developed packages of such positive initiatives. For example, by 1920, the John B. Stetson Hat Company in Philadelphia could boast of a company store where employees could buy foodstuffs at wholesale prices, and could partake of language and civic courses, group life insurance plans, a housing loan association, a savings bank, a Stetson chorus (which performed on local radio), Stetson baseball and track teams, numerous extracurricular clubs, a weekend lodge, a profit sharing plan, a Sunday school, a hospital, various bonus systems, and turkey giveaways on holidays.¹⁶²

In the first two decades of the 20th century, scores of firms instituted similar benefits, systematically managed by new personnel directors. During the 1920s, manufacturers extended positive initiatives to include health insurance and pension plans. New theories of human psychology led to emphasis on group dynamics as a means of building worker loyalty. The Western Electric Hawthorne Plant in Chicago was a key site for such experiments. To counter unions and appear democratically minded, so-called employee representation committees were formed where workers could air grievances. Corporate welfare efforts became well discussed and celebrated in the 1920s. The Great Depression of the 1930s, however, forced the jettisoning of benevolent programs as managers rushed to cut operating costs. The desire of American workers to see benefit plans reconstituted, though this time under union control and contract, would be an element in the massive labor organizing drives of the 1930s.¹⁶³

The American industrial workplace was transformed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But, the process was hardly uniform, comprehensive, or complete. Old practices persisted, particularly in small, specialized manufactories. Managers experimented with various approaches to labor control, positive and negative, often shifting from one to another, and no single strategy can be taken as a mark of the period. As the 1930s would also reveal, peace on the shop remained elusive. In spite of deliberate efforts by corporate managers to achieve control over production through technical and organizational means, they would soon learn that workers still had the power to close down assembly lines.

¹⁶² A comprehensive study of corporate welfare plans of the first decades of the 20th century is provided in Stuart Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). For the John B. Stetson Hat Company see, Licht, *Getting Work*, 160-161.

¹⁶³ The expansion of corporate welfare schemes in the 1920s and the role they played in the great labor organizing drives of the 1930s is discussed in David Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," in David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20th Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) and Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

MASS PRODUCTION UNIONISM: THE 1930s AND '40s

Labor unrest accompanied the rise of large-scale enterprise, with conflict between skilled workers and managers a major aspect. Unskilled and semiskilled factory hands did not recede into the background. Like their counterparts in an earlier age of industrial development, they engaged in protest focused not on control of production but rather on the grievous conditions under which they worked. In the 1880s, for example, textile workers in both the North and the South struck for better pay and shorter hours under the banner of the Knights of Labor. In the first two decades of the 20th century, organizers of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) led strikes of immigrant textile workers, including the dramatic strikes of woolen workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912 and silk textile workers in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1913. In Chicago at the same time, immigrant garment and packinghouse workers participated in notable strikes. The insurrectionary year of 1919 saw textile and garment workers on strike again, and during the summer of that year more than 350,000 steel workers walked off their jobs trying to gain union recognition and improved working conditions. The 1920s witnessed managerial and judicial onslaughts on trade unionism, but still textile hands in company towns in the southern Piedmont risked their jobs by striking in the later years of that decade. Between 1880 and 1930, factory operatives refused to remain silent, but few of their efforts brought either permanent labor organizations or union contracts.¹⁶⁴ Mass production unionism would first become an enduring feature of American manufacture in the 1930s and 1940s.

The critical story here is of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).¹⁶⁵ In the mid-1930s, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mineworkers Union, led a rebellion in the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Dissidents demanded that the mainstream association begin organizing the millions of factory hands in the nation's mass production industries who remained outside the craft union fold of the AFL. When the rebels were ousted from the federation in 1935, Lewis and his allies launched a number of union campaigns under the banner of their new CIO. They first picked the steel industry and no less than the giant in the field, U.S. Steel. Without a fight, executives of the company agreed in early 1937 to recognize the CIO's steel union and signed a contract that advanced favorable wages and benefits to U.S. Steel employees. Next up was General Motors. Here a dramatic confrontation unfolded, featuring the famed sit-down strikes of winter 1937, the most critical occurring in a Flint, Michigan, Chevrolet car assembly plant. Workers tripped the switches, shutting the conveyor belts, and occupied the building. Facing a united front, GM officials agreed in March to recognize the CIO's United Automobile Workers union (UAW).

¹⁶⁴ For the protests of semiskilled and unskilled industrial workers before the 1930s, see: Susan Levine, *Labor's True Woman: Carpet Weavers, Industrialization, and Labor Reform in the Gilded Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Melton McLaurin, *The Knights of Labor in the South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); Ardis Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1993); Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1965); and Jacquelyn D. Hall, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

¹⁶⁵ The literature on the CIO is voluminous. For textbook treatments, see James Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in 20th Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980) and Robert Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions, 1920-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

Encouraged by these early victories, CIO organizers targeted other steel and automobile manufacturers and other industries—rubber, electronics, meatpacking, and aviation. They faced stiff opposition. Smaller and less heeled companies than U.S. Steel in the steel industry held the line against the CIO. There would be a number of violent confrontations in organizing drives, such as the so-called Memorial Day Massacre in 1937, when police in Chicago broke up a demonstration of Republic Steel Company workers. In the auto industry, Chrysler followed GM in recognizing the UAW, but crusty Henry Ford resisted any dealings with the union until 1941. The struggle with Ford would include fierce fighting outside the mammoth River Rouge plant in Detroit built by Ford in the late 1920s. An attack by Ford guards on UAW leader Walter Reuther on an overpass at the plant gained national attention. Still, the CIO persisted and by the middle of World War II, the new federation had effected a greater unionization of the nation's mass production industries.

The extraordinary success of the CIO is often attributed to the federal protections afforded the trade union movement in the National Labor Relations Act passed in 1935. The federal government's assistance to labor played an important role, but there are other significant factors. The changing attitudes of some corporate executives are one consideration. Faced with difficult business times during the 1930s, they chose not to forfeit any market advantages with crippling strikes. Dealing on a total plant basis with the CIO brought stability to the shop floor, and corporate managers were well aware that, with politicians sympathetic to labor in national and local offices, they could not count on government help in quelling unrest. A young group of labor leaders, eager to escape the influence of their conservative elders in the AFL, saw an opportunity to make history and elevate their own careers in new organizing drives. Under them was a cadre of skillful shop floor organizers, many of them Socialists and Communists, whose political convictions fueled their dedication and work. With them were millions of mass production workers educated and politicized by the Great Depression. Many were second- and third-generation immigrants who, unlike their parents and grandparents, never entertained notions of returning to their homelands. They were in the U.S. to stay, citizens who wanted their families to enjoy a proper American standard of living, which included the fringe benefits lost during the depression (benefits guaranteed by union contract rather than made available through the good graces of their employers). These workers were able to overcome ethnic and racial divisions that had stymied union campaigns in the past. During and after World War I, African Americans surged out of the South to seek jobs in northern industry, often to find the factory gates closed to them, or positions made available by employers who deliberately were dividing their work forces racially to forestall unionization. CIO union drives succeeded in the 1930s and 1940s. Radical organizers and CIO leaders organized black workers to overcome their suspicions of a labor movement that previously had stood in their way of advancement, and white workers accepted unity, albeit grudgingly in many instances.

While industrial unions made strong gains nationally in the 1930s and 1940s, textile unionism in the South reached its peak with the strike of 1934, but began losing ground in the face of aggressive opposition from corporate managers and pro business political leaders. The 1934 strike was initiated by the United Textile Workers of America (UTW), an affiliate of the AFL. With more than 250,000 members, the UTW was fueled by workers' frustration over declining pay and working conditions that suffered during the 1920s and came under greater pressure as the industry adopted new production standards in response to the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. Facing higher labor costs, textile companies began laying off workers and increasing the productivity of those who remained on the job. The implementation of a 30-hour, two-shift

workweek in December 1933 further strained workers. When manufacturers talked of imposing additional wage and hourly reductions in 1934, workers responded by unionizing. Beginning on July 14, wildcat strikes swept across Alabama, pulling 20,000 workers out of the mills. Then the UTW called for a national strike in September that took an estimated 400,000 workers out of mills from Alabama to Maine, making it the largest industrial strike in American history.¹⁶⁶

Although the strike began with tremendous enthusiasm, it began failing in its second week and fell apart within a month, although many union members protested when national UTW officials decided to end the walkout. In retrospect, the reasons for its failure are obvious. Workers and the UTW did not have the resources to wage a protracted struggle. Most workers lived in company housing, where they could be—and in many cases were—evicted for involvement in strike or union activities. Fierce competition within the industry and the effects of the Depression left cotton manufacturers unable to meet workers' demands for increased hours and wages. Manufacturers had huge inventories on hand—a byproduct of weak international demand for finished products—allowing them to wait out the strike. The UTW might have been more successful had the strike been delayed until economic conditions improved, but that would have required containing the emotional fervor that set the strike in motion—an unlikely prospect given workers' sentiments in the summer of 1934.¹⁶⁷

The strike of 1934 in many ways represented the height of organized labor in the South. The seeds of the strike had been sown by the growth of southern textile unionism in the 1920s and, in particular, the strikes of 1929. On March 12, 1929, workers walked out of factories in Elizabethton, Tennessee. Soon they were joined by thousands of millhands in Marion and Gastonia, North Carolina, and other piedmont towns. In South Carolina, 81 separate strikes involving over 79,000 workers occurred. The strike was a protest against mill owners' efforts to tighten expenses, increase efficiency, and limit wages. When local officials used force against striking workers in several communities, the strike drew heavy press coverage. In Elizabethton, 800 troops broke the workers' resistance and forced the reopening of the mills. In Marion, special deputies killed 6 workers and wounded 25 others. The most celebrated events occurred at the massive Loray Mill in Gastonia, where Ella May Wiggins, the balladeer and heroine of the strike, was ambushed and murdered on her way to a union rally. Although the 1929 strike ultimately met with failure, it had a critical bearing on the future of textile unionism in the South by teaching workers the value of creative tactics, indigenous leaders, and the power of collective action. These lessons set the stage for the dramatic events that unfolded during the summer and fall of 1934.¹⁶⁸

The 1934 strike left workers disillusioned. Many simply tried to forget and attempted to restore a sense of normalcy to their lives. Blacklisting of strike leaders contributed to workers' desire to purge memories of the conflict. Union leaders and their families were driven out of the industry and forced to leave their homes. Over time, memories of the strike changed. Succeeding

¹⁶⁶ Dan Vivian of the National Park Service contributed information on southern textile unionism and the strike of 1934 to this narrative. William J. Cooper, Jr., and Thomas E. Terrill, *The American South: A History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1996), II: 654-655; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like A Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 289-357.

¹⁶⁷ Cooper and Terrill, *The American South*, II: 655-656.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 656-657. On the strike at the Loray Mill, see John A. Salmond, *Gastonia 1929* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

generations were likely to hear that “outsiders” brought the union in, not that southern mill hands had created one of the largest grass-roots labor organizations in American history.¹⁶⁹

The bitter memories of the strike contributed to labor’s limited success in organizing southern textile workers in the decades that followed. From 1935 to 1945, organized labor enjoyed its greatest growth in American history. Membership among non-farm workers rose from 3.6 to 14.3 million (38.5 percent of non-farm workers) nationally. Union membership grew in the South, but through the 1960s the proportion of organized workers in the region was half the rate for the remainder of the nation. Textiles, the largest and most important manufacturing industry in the region, remained largely nonunion. The overall result was a critical weakness in the South for organized labor, which in turn had significant implications for the national economy and southern politics. In the 1940s, the South emerged as a haven for industries seeking low-wage, nonunion, unskilled labor. Southern politicians, eager to bring needed jobs to communities suffering from the continuing agricultural crisis, offered tax incentives, subsidies, and other forms of assistance to companies that located manufacturing plants in the South. The crusade for southern industrial development, commonly known as “the selling of the South,” was made possible in large part because southern workers displayed little interest in organizing.¹⁷⁰

To understand the CIO’s success is to peel away at such layers of answers. Yet, nothing was assured. Managerial and conservative political backlashes to the gains made by the CIO before and during World War II would bring legislation, specifically the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 that curbed organized labor’s thrust and powers. The purging of radical organizers with the Cold War Red Scare of the late 1940s and 1950s sapped further energies from the movement. The growth of union bureaucracies and removing conflict from the shop floor and into negotiating rooms with union and management officials, government mediators, federal agencies, and courts dampened local worker insurgency and involvement. Stultification in industrial unionism would set in during the 1950s.

MILITARY INDUSTRIALIZATION

Unionization in the nation’s mass production industries represents a new stage in the history of manufacture in the U.S. At the same time that the CIO was achieving organizing success, other kinds of shifts were occurring in American industry. Textiles, for example, the nation’s first and still a leading industry, began to lose ground in the 1920s. Facing increased competition, venerable New England textile firms closed their doors or moved to the South to take advantage of that region’s low wage labor base. Southern textile companies, however, faced stiff competition themselves from cheap imports. Some specialized textile producers survived operating in niche markets, but others succumbed to a general standardization in consumer taste (fostered by new retail chain stores). Textile manufacture, a visible element in American industrialization, receded into the economic background.¹⁷¹

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, other leading industries appeared to be going the way of textiles—the depression saw a one-third reduction in industrial output—but bad economic

¹⁶⁹ Cooper and Terrill, *The American South*, II: 656-657.

¹⁷⁰ James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Cooper and Terrill, *The American South*, II: 657-658.

¹⁷¹ The decline of textiles in the 1920s is treated in Philip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry: Production, Markets, and Power in Philadelphia Textiles, 1885-1941* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

times hid the successful emergence of new pursuits. Automobiles had already been established as a dominant industry, but newer trades such as electronics, aircraft, petroleum, and chemical and food processing would serve as the basis for a new surge in industrial activity for the nation once prosperous times returned.¹⁷² Sectorial shifts marked American manufacture during and after the 1920s. But as important for industrial renewal would be the quantum growth in military goods production that accompanied World War II and the subsequent Cold War.

Before World War II, the production of military hardware figured minimally in America's rise to industrial supremacy. Gun manufacture occupied a chapter in the evolution of standardized parts production techniques. Both the Civil War and World War I saw expanded, but not sustained, military production. As early as the 1890s, major steel producers began to rely on orders from the U.S. Navy for armor plate. Still, it was not until World War II that military manufacture became a basic foundation block of the American economy.¹⁷³

Military industrialization saw the building of new corridors of industry. With the exception of a number of locations in New England, military production during World War II and the Cold War occurred largely outside the great industrial heartland constructed in the late 19th century. Los Angeles and Orange County in southern California formed the most prominent band of military industry. A complementary strip emerged in the Pacific Northwest centered in Seattle, Washington, and an arc of military production sites appeared in the South stretching from Columbia, South Carolina, through Huntsville, Alabama, and Houston, Texas. Local boosterism, climate conditions, engineering expertise, congressional politics, relations between defense department planners and corporate executives, and serendipity contributed to the locations of military manufacture. All these factors, for example, figured in southern California's dominance in defense production. California in general experienced limited industrial development before the rise of military manufacture. The key prior industry was fish, fruit, and vegetable canning. A largely female, Mexican-American cannery work force was influential in the work and labor protest associated with this industry.

In the 1920s, several leading airplane manufacturers located their operation in Los Angeles. Local boosters and government incentives had lured them there, and retired Air Force officials who were active in these companies liked the warm climate. The airplane industry in Los Angeles thrived with expansion of local university engineering programs. These companies were perfectly situated during World War II to receive massive orders for air force bombers for the Pacific war campaign. After the war, local congressmen with business leaders who had established close contacts with defense department officials, lobbied effectively to have military contracts continue to flow to the region.

¹⁷² Michael Bernstein in *The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America, 1929-1939* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) argues that the economic crisis of the 1930s was exacerbated by the eclipse of such old industries as textiles and the relative youth of newer trades, such as electronics.

¹⁷³ For the military industrialization during and after World War II, see: Roger Lotchin, ed., *The Martial Metropolis: U.S. Cities in War and Peace* (New York: Praeger, 1984); Roger Lotchin, *Fortress California, 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Ann Markusen, ed., *The Rise of the Gun Belt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Bruce Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Matters were simpler elsewhere. Local engineering expertise and effective politicking saw key aerospace contracts go to firms just outside Boston, Massachusetts, and submarine and helicopter orders to companies in Connecticut (with textiles in decline, military production kept industry alive in New England). Southern communities after World War II saw the building of military production facilities in the region largely through the long-standing control of key committees in Congress by incumbent southern congressmen. Finally, the Seattle area owes its place in military manufacture to William Boeing. He started manufacturing airplanes in the city before World War I, oversaw the company's slow expansion and, later, with the help of key politicians, the firm prospered with defense department contracts. Companies in America's old industrial heartland did join in the military mobilization of World War II—car manufacturers in Detroit produced tanks rather than automobiles. But during the subsequent Cold War, they did not directly participate in the military manufacture of the era. Meeting consumer demand, less engineering expertise, and ineffective lobbying left America's old industrial cities outside the military industrial fold.

Military production facilities established during and after World War II offered varied kinds of work and differed from other manufactories. Military goods makers had large engineering and technical staffs. A core of skilled machinists and other skilled workers involved in parts production comprised a large segment of the production work force. However, women hired at low wages assembled basic components on an assembly-line basis. Highly skilled workers and technicians assembled modules according to particular specification; the same was true for final assemblage. Outside of the South, military production workers toiled under union agreements and received relatively high wages. Lucrative government contracts to military producers resulted in well-paid jobs and shielded workers in these firms from the various recessions that marked the post-World War II American economy—that is until recently. With the end of the Cold War and cutbacks in defense spending, workers in communities that prospered for two generations through military production now share with other manufacturing workers the experience of industrial decline—of permanent plant closings and massive job loss.

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION

America's industrial history begins in the 1790s with home and craftshop production and a fascinating debate on manufacture. Two hundred years later with the rapid erosion of the nation's industrial base, that history appears to be coming to an end. Plant closings have occurred in such a flurry in the last two decades that it is difficult to gain a proper perspective on developments.

Contemporary analysts focus on specific events in the 1970s and 1980s to explain industrial decline. The oil embargo crises of the era, hyperinflation, high interest rates, and foreign competition are cited as chief reasons for the recent loss of millions of manufacturing jobs.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ For general contemporary analyses of deindustrialization, see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982) and Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). The decline of the steel industry in recent decades has gained special attention; see, David Bensman and Roberta Lynch, *Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987); William Serrin, *Homestead: The Glory and Tragedy of an American Steel Town* (New York: Times Books, 1992); and Mark Reutter, *Sparrows Point: Making Steel—The Rise and Ruin of American Industrial Might* (New York: Summit Books, 1988).

Only a few scholars have attempted to cast the current situation in a longer historical framework. Historians can point to the last decades of the 19th century for the first instances of deindustrialization. Entrepreneurial failures in family-owned businesses, shifting consumer tastes and technologies, and the early search for low wage labor contributed to the disappearance of manufacturing firms from cities. The 1920s mark another period of decline. Capital flight to low wage areas continued, but the coming of a mass consumer culture proved the death knell to specialty firms throughout the nation's existing industrial heartland. The 1920s saw a renewed merger movement and decisions by national corporate leaders to liquidate certain facilities. They aimed to close older inefficient plants and curb overproduction. Such decisions left communities without companies that supplied manufacturing jobs for generations.¹⁷⁵ The evolving nature and purview of the corporation are key elements. In more recent times for example, telecommunications and transportation improvements have allowed for global operations. As foreign competition has pushed companies to take advantage of low wage labor outside the boundaries of the country, corporations have shifted production not from one community to another in the U.S. as in the past, but to overseas locations. The move from a national to a global corporate capitalist system has successively contributed to manufacturing job loss.¹⁷⁶

One important impact of industrial job loss is related to a group outside the larger story of American manufacture—African Americans. With the exception of the South, blacks through the 1920s and 1930s do not figure significantly in the nation's industrial history for one reason: exclusion. Hiring practices of employers and informal and organized opposition from white workers left few positions for blacks in northern manufacture. Pressure from black organizations and the hiring decisions of individuals such as Henry Ford opened some doors in the 1920s, but the greater employment of blacks awaited World War II and federal anti-discrimination edicts. African Americans began to occupy a growing place in northeastern and midwestern industry in the 1940s, but at the same time those regions experienced long-term industrial decay. Blacks (and Latinos) were newcomers to the northern industrial scene when industry there was not expanding, when manufacturing jobs were shifting overseas, and they would inherit districts of abandoned factories. Past de-industrialization has played a role in the nation's current urban problems.¹⁷⁷

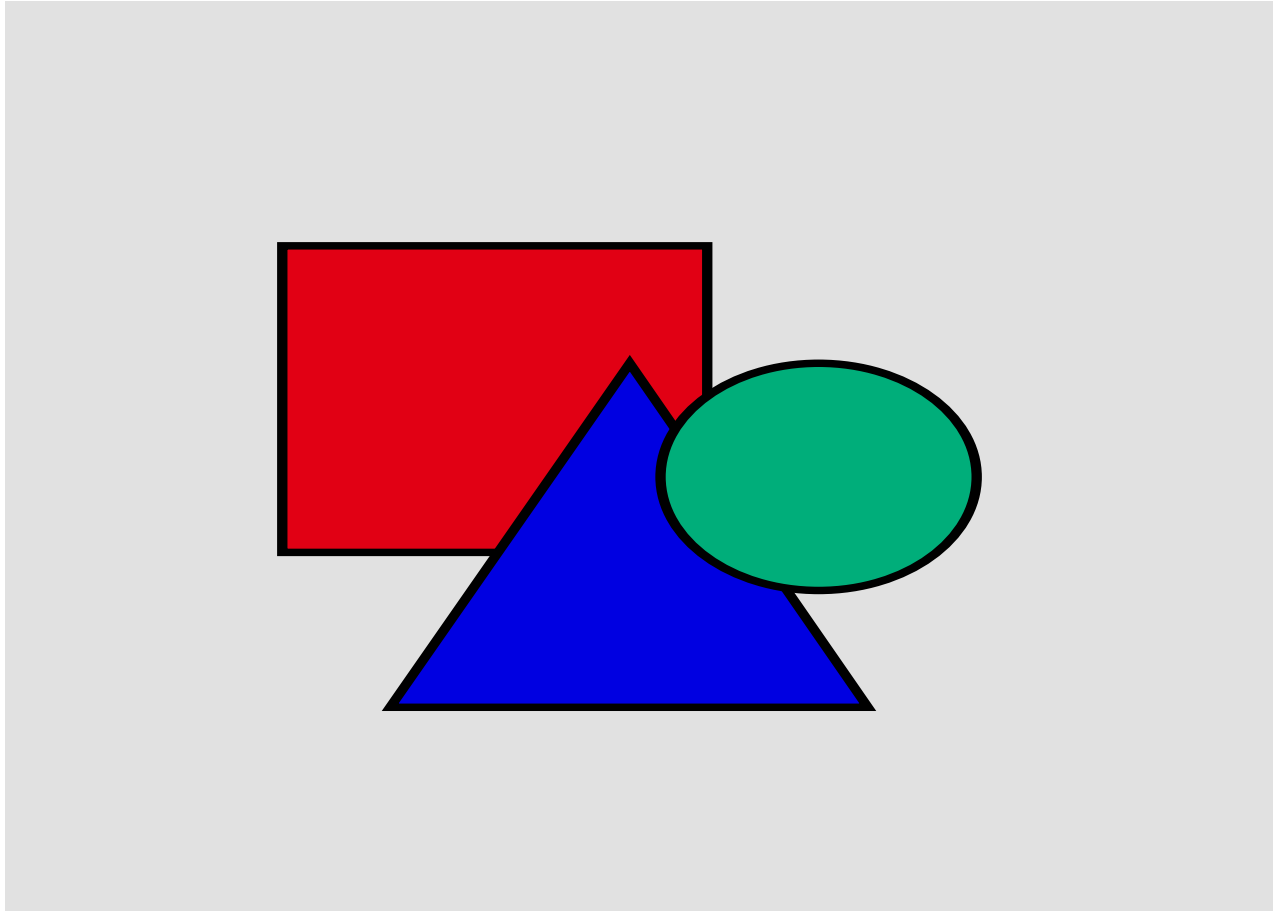
Thomas Jefferson worried that industrialization would generate inequalities that would destroy all possibilities for a true democratic republic. But he did not foresee that manufacturing jobs would provide a foothold for many generations of newcomers to the U.S., and that American industrial workers would collectively make their jobs better compensated, more secure, and dignified. Today new jobs are being created in the service and white-collar sectors, but do not provide the same material and personal rewards and enhancements of the lost manufacturing positions. Whether economic prosperity is sustainable with permanent losses in manufacturing employment remains to be seen.

¹⁷⁵ John Cumbler, *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics and Work in Trenton* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

¹⁷⁶ Robert Ross and Kent Trachte, *Global Capitalism: The New Leviathan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

¹⁷⁷ On deindustrialization and African Americans, see Joe William Trotter, *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) and Licht, *Getting Work*.

TRANSPORTATION LABOR: MARITIME, RAILROAD, AND TRUCKING



Horse drawn carts stopped on a commercial street in Chicago, Illinois, during a Teamsters strike, 1902.
Chicago Daily News negatives collection, DN-0003842. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.

TRANSPORTATION LABOR: MARITIME, RAILROAD, AND TRUCKING¹⁷⁸

Until the rise of the new labor history in the 1960s, workers in the transportation sector of the American economy were rarely the subjects of serious scholarship. Skilled workers in the railroad industry prompted occasional discussion, particularly in relation to such massive upheavals as the strikes of 1877, 1885-1886, 1894, and 1922. The ability to shut down or disrupt commerce commanded the notice of journalists, corporate managers, government officials, and, later, historians. But largely invisible in the historical literature were unskilled laborers who laid and maintained the nation's railroad tracks, dredged rivers, dug canals, or transported goods on and off the docks of port towns and cities. In recent years, transportation workers have received more attention from labor historians (although they have received less examination than artisans or skilled workers in manufacturing). This essay explores the history of labor in transportation—pre-industrial maritime commerce, 19th century river-borne commerce, canal building, longshore labor, construction and operation of railroads, and the rise of trucking in the 20th century. In addition, the essay highlights the existence of sites or landmarks that symbolize the labor or struggles of workers in these sectors.

THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Proximity to water influenced the location of most towns and villages in the colonial and early national era, just as it would well into the early 19th century. Access provided by the Atlantic Ocean and various rivers, bays, and streams allowed European colonists to settle along the eastern coast of North America and to engage in vigorous commerce with Europe and Great Britain. Water-borne transportation enabled people and goods to move readily from one place to another.

The coastal region of South Carolina, a colony founded in the late 17th century, is a case in point. Transatlantic slave trade linked white European slave traders, white colonists seeking to purchase slaves, and enslaved Africans in a brutal and exploitative circuit of exchange. In addition, white colonists engaged in extensive trade with both England and other slave societies in the Caribbean, exporting to the latter foodstuffs in exchange for, among other things, more slaves. Within the colony itself, river travel linked plantations and towns in the low country, where the majority of the colony's population resided. Before the construction of passable roads, African and African American slaves performed a range of economic tasks. While most slaves labored in agriculture—producing foodstuffs, tobacco, rice, and later cotton for export—a smaller number were involved in commerce and transportation. Indeed, in the late 17th through at least the mid-18th century, planters in the growing colony of South Carolina remained dependent on slave skills and stamina for carrying out agricultural production, skilled craftwork, and the transportation of goods. Black boat crews, rowing from plantation to plantation, provided, in historian Peter Wood's words, "the backbone of the lowland transportation system during most of the colonial era, moving plantation goods to market and ferrying and guiding whites from one landing to

¹⁷⁸ This context was provided by Eric Arnesen, Professor of History and African-American Studies and Chair of the History Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Arnesen specializes in African-American labor and in particular on work, race, employment discrimination, racial identity, and labor activism. His books include *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Harvard University Press, 2001), *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (Oxford University Press, 1991), and the co-edited *Labor Histories, Class, Politics and the Working-Class Experience* (University of Illinois Press, 1998).

another."¹⁷⁹ White colonists' reliance upon black labor in colonial transportation generated a "steady demand for ships' hands in the coastal colony," which, in turn, afforded some mobility and autonomy to these slaves.

From the colonial era through roughly 1830, the principal cities of the Atlantic seaboard—Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore—were "essentially depots for transoceanic shipping, and their labor force was largely tied to maritime commerce."¹⁸⁰ Historian Gary Nash provides the most detailed portrait of life and labor in colonial and revolutionary-era cities, examining what he calls the "web of seaport life." "Water dominated the life of America's northern seaport towns in the seventeenth century," he argues, "dictating their physical arrangement, providing them with their links to the outer world, yielding up much of their sustenance, and subtly affecting the relationships among the different groups who made up these budding commercial capitals . . . The colonial seaports existed primarily as crossroads of maritime transport and commercial interchange."¹⁸¹ The North American colonies were an integral part of England's mercantilist empire, importing manufactured goods and people—wealthy colonists, indentured servants, independent artisans and laborers, and African slaves—and exporting raw materials such as tobacco, rice, furs, grain, cattle, and timber.

Trade in this era was governed by the vagaries of weather, the change of seasons, fluctuations in commercial demand, and international politics and war. During the winter, ice made water transportation impossible in the North, while hurricanes in the West Indies and the southern colonies wreaked havoc with sailing schedules. The outbreak of war could halt commerce for varying periods of time.¹⁸² As a result, work for the labor force that loaded and unloaded the ships or sailed them across the Atlantic was rarely steady and always unpredictable. It was impossible for employers of waterfront labor to impose the kinds of work and time discipline that manufacturers developed in workshops and factories during the early years of the Industrial Revolution. (The irregularity and unpredictability of work did not vanish with the passing of time. In the early 20th century, one social reformer noted that the "instability of the weather and other unavoidable delays of a great port add elements of uncertainty . . . that seem to leave [ship loading and unloading] . . . for the moment outside of the great domain of organized transportation.")¹⁸³

Maritime workers played critical roles in the events leading up to the American Revolution. Sailors and dock workers, together with artisans, journeymen, and day laborers, participated in crowd actions against British colonial officials and policies in the 1760s and 1770s. With the enforcement of the Stamp Act in 1765, for instance, mariners and other urban workers in the colony of New York marched down Broadway to Fort George, along the way threatening supporters of the British policy, smashing thousands of windows, and hanging the governor in

¹⁷⁹ Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974), 203, 114, 179. Working in "close proximity" to both European colonists and Native Americans, slaves traveled on the "slender boats...[that] were the central means of transportation in South Carolina for two generations while roads and bridges were still too poor and infrequent for easy land travel." Boats made from hollowed out cypress logs were poled, rowed, and paddled through "the labyrinth of lowland waterways."

¹⁸⁰ David Montgomery, "The Working Classes of the Pre-Industrial American City, 1780-1830," *Labor History*, 9, no. 1 (Winter 1968), 3-4.

¹⁸¹ Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 55, 57.

¹⁸³ Charles Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (New York: Survey Associates, 1915), 1.

effigy. Maritime workers joined craftsmen in forming chapters of the Sons of Liberty, participated in boycotts of merchants who imported English goods, and pressured officials to issue "clearances to ships without stamped papers."¹⁸⁴ In the Boston Massacre of 1770, one of the first victims was Crispus Attucks, a fugitive slave seaman who was killed by British soldiers in front of the city's Custom House. In the words of one contemporary in 1775, seamen, fishermen, and harbor workers served as an "army of furious men, whose actions are all animated by a spirit of vengeance and hatred" against the English whose policies had hurt them economically and who had destroyed "the liberty of their country."¹⁸⁵

Contributing to seamen's particular hostility to the British in the Revolutionary era was their longstanding grievance against impressment by the British Royal Navy. In 1757, for example, the British forcibly impressed some 800 New Yorkers in a nighttime roundup. "From the very beginning," Jesse Lemisch wrote, "[T]he history of impressment in America is a tale of venality, deceit, and vindictiveness." Seamen responded before and during the Revolutionary era by escaping capture and by violence—engaging in fistfights and riots. In 1747, members of Boston's "lower class" were "beyond measure enraged" by impressment, noted colonial official Thomas Hutchinson. A crowd numbering several hundred attacked a British naval lieutenant, sheriff, and deputy. After descending on the Town House, they insisted that the General Court arrest those officers involved in impressment and release of those who had been impressed.¹⁸⁶

Canals and Canal Builders in the Early Republic

The "Canal Era" spanned the years from the 1780s, when the first efforts at construction began, to the 1850s, when canals were largely eclipsed by the rise of the railroads. The canal industry, historian Peter Way argues, played a leading role in the uneven transition to industrial capitalism.¹⁸⁷ Canals opened up new markets by linking distant regions, many for the first time. The construction of such grand and expensive undertakings required large sums of capital and the creation of new managerial strategies. But lack of labor and money hindered efforts. Canal construction grew slowly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. By 1816, the U.S. could boast a mere 100 miles of canals; most, like the four-mile canal circumnavigating the falls above Richmond in 1785 or the 22 mile canal linking the Santee and Cooper rivers in South Carolina in 1899, were relatively short in length.

Only in the second decade of the 19th century did canal building truly come of age. The building of the 364-mile Erie Canal, which linked Albany on the Hudson River to Buffalo on Lake Erie, represented a quantitative and qualitative leap forward and ushered in a "transportation

¹⁸⁴ Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 301-02, 308; Jesse Lemisch, "The Radicalism of the Inarticulate: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," in Alfred F. Young, *Dissent: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1968), 39-82; Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Lemisch, "Radicalism of the Inarticulate," 54. For a discussion of the world of 18th-century sailors, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹⁸⁶ Lemisch, "Radicalism of the Inarticulate," 45, 48-49.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Way, *Common Labour: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals 1780-1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). The early republic also witnessed the rise of private and state-sponsored projects to build turnpikes. By the early 19th century, some 55 private turnpike construction companies received charters in Pennsylvania; 57 in New York, and over 100 in Massachusetts.

revolution" that affected commerce, industry, and agriculture. Completed in 1825, the Erie became a conduit for the flow of both population and goods; it increased the ease of migration, reduced the cost of transporting goods, and accelerated the commercialization of parts of upstate New York.¹⁸⁸ Other states and cities became promoters of their own canal schemes, fearful of the economic consequences of being bypassed by new commercial routes.

Building canals required not only large infusions of capital, but the assembling of vast numbers of laborers to perform the arduous work of felling trees, digging, blasting, and carpentry required to carve canals out of the earth. At its height in the 1830s, the canal construction industry relied upon some 35,000 people. Canal construction required a larger number of workers than almost any other economic enterprise in the early Republic. Reflecting what Way calls "the fragmented nature of the labour market at this time and merchant capital's willingness to use whatever materials were at hand," the industry relied upon an extremely diverse work force composed of slaves, indentured white servants, and white free laborers. In the South, the slave system adapted accordingly. "Most southern canals and navigation improvements," Robert Starobin wrote, "were excavated by slave labor." Initially, canal companies hired slaves from their owners for a specified period (the hiring-out method), but over time, they "converted to direct slave ownership" because of the difficulty in procuring hired slaves and the greater financial savings derived from owning them. Southern canal projects—including the Brunswick and Altamaha, the Dismal Swamp, the Muscle Shoals, the Baratavia and Lafourche, the Rivanna, the Roanoke, the Bayou Boeuf, the James River and Kanawha, the Cape Fear & Deep River Navigation Works, and the Santee—were completed partially or entirely by slave labor.¹⁸⁹

Despite the persistence of slavery outside the South in the decades after the American Revolution, canal companies in the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast turned to indentured or free white laborers to meet their demand for workers. Indentured servitude had a long history in colonial America; in exchange for the cost of passage, food, clothing, and housing, servants would legally bind themselves to masters for a specified period of time, during which they renounced their right to migrate or change employers. By the end of the 18th century, however, the system of indentured servitude was in steep decline. Unfree white labor "proved fractious by running away, stealing and fighting," Way argues, leading canal companies "outside the South to turn increasingly to free labor."¹⁹⁰ At the outset of the 19th century, free laborers were native-born white men and increasingly immigrants. By the 1830s, the majority of common laborers in canal construction were Irish.

The on-the-job character of canal work remained difficult throughout the canal age. Canallers worked outdoors, which meant constant exposure to the elements. Daylight often set the hours of work: in winter, a day's work might last between eight and ten hours, in summer between 12 and 14. The range of backbreaking tasks remained large. Grubbing involved clearing land by felling trees with axes and removing rocks with picks (stump removal required pulling by oxen, digging,

¹⁸⁸ The ideological consequences on the people of upstate New York are analyzed in Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950).

¹⁸⁹ Way, *Common Labour*, 31; Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 28-29.

¹⁹⁰ Way, *Common Labour*, 27.

and in some cases, even blasting). Next came embankment, which required the construction of the canal's sides (when the canal was above ground level), or excavation, which required digging through and removal of vegetation, soil, sand, and rock (when the canal was below ground level). Tons of debris were removed in wheelbarrows or carts pulled by horses or oxen. In some cases, the excavation of rock required canallers to hand-drill a hole, pack it with powder, insert and light a fuse, and blast the recalcitrant object. (Blasting was also necessary in the dangerous process of tunneling through mountains). Lastly, skilled workers, including masons and stonecutters, constructed watertight locks. In sum, according to Way, "At work, the canaller was a digging, clawing, tunnelling, lock-building machine—a pumping and pulling piston."¹⁹¹

Canallers' conditions of life and labor remained harsh. Workers experienced irregular employment that cut into earnings, long days of hard and dangerous work, unsanitary and primitive work camps, harsh environmental conditions (exposed to extreme heat in summer and cold in winter), periodic epidemics, and by the 1830s, declining pay rates. The makeshift work camps (in essence, shantytowns) in which most male canallers lived offered few amenities. Men often greatly outnumbered women (who worked as cooks and clothes cleaners), having left families behind while carrying out seasonal labor. Usually, contractors provided food and shelter as part of agreed-upon payment, but because of the temporary nature, cabins or bunkhouses were primitive. Workers suffered the consequences of unscrupulous management: contractors often mismanaged payrolls or ran off with funds designated to pay the work force.

These conditions gave laborers reason to resist, and they did so both individually and collectively. Slaves and indentured servants absconded, while free wage workers not only quit in large numbers (transience was an important, if informal, form of canallers' resistance) but fought back physically, formed secret societies, and struck, with or without rudimentary unions. "Workers rioted and struck virtually everywhere canals were dug," Way writes, "with a regularity that made the industry perhaps the most significant source of collective action among labourers in this period."¹⁹² In Williamsport, Maryland, for example, C&O Canal laborers engaged in a "kind of guerilla war" in January 1834. In unsettled economic times—a contractor was unable to pay his workers and tensions over access to remaining jobs increased—factions of Irish laborers fought one another in an effort to drive competitors from the labor market and secure work for themselves. Two companies of federal troops dispatched from Baltimore suppressed the rioters by arresting 35 participants and occupying the labor camps for the winter's duration.¹⁹³ Similar ethnic and labor violence broke out that same year between factions of Irish and Germans outside Point of Rocks, Maryland. These outbreaks of labor conflict were not isolated incidents: between 1834 and 1840, the C&O company faced "at least ten significant disturbances and virtually continuous labor unrest," in which the state militia intervened five times and federal troops once. At the canal's Paw Paw Tunnel in 1836, workers insisted on the discharge of the contractor's manager, backing up their demand with force. On other occasions, workers protested the non-payment of wages, as did C&O tunnelers who descended on Oldtown, in western Maryland, where they "ransacked several buildings." Repression proved to be a common response to canallers' protests. The Oldtown protest was crushed by the militia, which arrested

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 143; also see 135-142.

¹⁹² Ibid., 203.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 200-202.

ten leaders. From 1820 to 1949, the American and Canadian armies suppressed at least 32 strikes or riots.¹⁹⁴

Canallers possessed little power to alter the conditions of their labor. While craftsmen often had valuable and even irreplaceable skills, as well as deep social and political ties to communities (affording them more political influence), unskilled canal laborers demonstrated little ability to alter their plight. Employers easily secured assistance from state and federal government, and most canal workers' protests or uprisings were crushed by military intervention. Canallers "had difficulty even grasping what was happening to them," Way concludes, "and could only fight a holding action in an attempt to stem the worst effects" of industrial capitalism's forward march. "While participants in the process, they were very much driven by forces beyond their control."¹⁹⁵ Their cultural resources and agency notwithstanding, canal workers simply could not match the power of their employers.

Unskilled canal workers' ideological perspectives differed from the republicanism and craft pride of urban artisans often studied by labor historians. Most canallers remained outside the formal political system, often failing to meet residency requirements. While ethnicity sometimes formed the basis for community, it also "promoted sectarian warfare" and ethnic and racial feuding. Canallers drank heavily and fought with outsiders and among themselves. "Vice, violence and criminality" were "real problems that pulled at the seams of group unity."¹⁹⁶

Men on the River: Flatboats, Keelboats, and Steamboats

Natural inland rivers constituted even more crucial transportation arteries than canals. In 1811, before the advent of the steamship, commerce in the trans-Appalachian West along the Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri river systems relied upon flatboats and keelboats that served the growing number of riverside communities. Keelboats were long and narrow (running between 40 and 80 feet in length), carrying a crew of roughly 10 men. Although the boats could travel from Pittsburgh to New Orleans in 6 weeks, the return trip could take as long as four-and-a-half months. Thus, keelboats made only one round trip annually. The up-river trip required the full strength of the keelboat's crew, whose members used poles and oars literally to push the boat up-river against the current. Legends of tremendous strength and heroism surrounded early keelboatmen, who were described as "half horse, half-alligator;" the most famous of these boatmen was Mike Fink, "King of the Keelboatmen." While the expansion of steamboat traffic on western rivers did not destroy the keelboat trade, it did diminish the keelboats' importance.¹⁹⁷

Flatboats, in contrast, continued to survive well into the steamboat age. Unlike keelboats, flatboats made only one-way trips downriver, carrying northern products southward. On average, these easily constructed vessels ran 60 feet long and 15 feet across. Described as floating, "large

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 200-228.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 195, 166, 17.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 166, 167. Appropriately, Way's portrait of canallers' lives and culture is never romantic, for he calls needed attention to the underside of working-class culture that was nurtured by the process of capital accumulation.

¹⁹⁷ Walter Blair and Franklin J. Meine, *Mike Fink: King of Mississippi Keelboatmen* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933); Mildred L. Hartsough, *From Canoe to Steel Barge on the Upper Mississippi* (University of Minnesota Press, 1934); Edith McCall, *Conquering the Rivers: Henry Miller Shreve and the Navigation of America's Inland Waterways* (LSU Press, 1984); Leland D. Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1941).

square boxes," they were built in a number of river cities—Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville, to mention a few. When flatboats reached their destination, they were broken up and the wood sold as scrap. Flatboat crews then faced the task of returning north. Until the early 19th century, many did so on foot, walking the hazardous "Natchez Trace" by the thousands annually; after steamships began navigating western rivers regularly, many flatboatmen paid their \$3 for passage on deck. Although their heyday occurred in the 1840s, flatboats continued to transport goods through the end of the century.

Working conditions on flatboats remained difficult into the 19th century. Crews were exposed to extreme weather, insects, and robbers. These men lacked access to medical care; they usually cooked meals in a planed sandbox located on the deck. Despite relatively high wages, the work was temporary, and after each voyage flatboatmen were discharged to find their way home and to secure new employment. "The early western boatmen were, above all, frontiersmen," historian Michael Allen concludes in his portrait of flatboatmen. "They lived and worked on the rough edge of civilized American society, and behaved accordingly." In the early 1930s, two authors described them as ex-soldiers, former Indian scouts, "Jolly French Canadians," and the "toughest farm boys, who longed for a life less drab than farms provided." Flatboatmen deserved their reputation for rough living—including fighting, gambling, and heavy drinking. More than 200,000 men, Allen concludes, found employment on western river flatboats during the steamship age.¹⁹⁸

But the conditions of the trade, and the character of the men who worked in it, were not static. Before the 19th century, French Canadian rivermen dominated the flatboat crews of the western rivers. Following the American Revolution, they were replaced by native-born European Americans of English, Scotch and Scotch Irish background (what Allen calls the "famed Kentucky boatmen"). By the early 19th century, some Germans, a small number of free blacks, and a somewhat larger number of African-American slaves—particularly along southern rivers—also joined crews. (Slaves generally labored in the Yazoo basin and along the lower Mississippi, working as crew members on the flatboats that carried cypress lumber.) Yet in the pre-Civil War decades, conditions got better in the flatboat trade as river improvements increased, flatboat construction was more dependable and size increased, and steamboats offered a speedy return up-river voyage. The quality of food improved as new stoves were installed and, in some cases, women were employed as cooks on larger flatboats. Although flatboat crews continued to attract farmers and especially young single men, the "new flatboatmen" included growing numbers of married men.¹⁹⁹

The advent of steamboating in 1807 (and its introduction on the Mississippi river in 1911) was made possible by the design innovations and entrepreneurial drive of Robert Fulton. The steamboat ushered in a new stage in water-borne commerce, making possible economical, long-distance up-river travel and trade.²⁰⁰ From the 1820s through 1850 and beyond, hundreds of

¹⁹⁸ Blair and Meine, *Mike Fink*, 37; Michael Allen, *Western Rivermen: Ohio and Mississippi Boatmen and the Myth of the Alligator Horse* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 172.

¹⁹⁹ The new boatmen in the steamship era, Allen concludes, were family men. The "'average' flatboatman of this period was a white, British-descended Ohio Valley male in his mid-twenties;" most "hailed from the Old Northwest, especially Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois." Allen, *Western Rivermen*, 93, 172. Also see Michael Allen, "The Ohio River: Artery of Movement," in Robert L. Reid, ed., *Always a River: The Ohio River and the American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 105-129.

²⁰⁰ Mildred L. Hartsough, *From Canoe to Steel Barge on the Upper Mississippi* (n.p., University of Minnesota Press,

steamboats traveled the nation's western rivers annually. Not only were steamboats larger, driven by mechanical power, and more expensive than keel or flatboats, but also division of labor was more complex and the labor force more ethnically diverse. Crew size varied according to boat size. Small crews were made up of four or five hands, while the largest might require well over 100 workers; the average crew at mid-century on the western rivers was roughly 26. At the top of the employment hierarchy in terms of authority, skill, and compensation were officers (including the captain), who were overwhelmingly native-born European Americans. Cabin crews attended to both officers and the deck crews. Described as "little more than a hotel staff transferred to the river," cabin crew consisted of cooks, waiters, stewards, cabin boys, and chambermaids, and received the lowest wages of any group of steamboat workers. Deck crews (about half or more of the total crew) were often composed of unskilled and young men who were migratory workers facing irregular employment. Their work, by all accounts, was difficult: in addition to on-board labor, deck crews also "served as brawn and muscle men," moving cargo on and off the boat with little help from mechanical or other aids.²⁰¹

The ethnic and racial composition of steamboat crews changed more dramatically than did those in other sectors of inland water transportation. In the 1840s and 1850s, increasing numbers of German and Irish immigrants replaced native-born white Americans on these crews. Only below St. Louis did African-American slaves work on deck crews before the Civil War, although after the war emancipated slaves moved into deck work and dominated crews on both the lower and upper Mississippi river. Often excluded from stable community life and the object of racial characterizations and scorn, the "roustabouts," as black deckhands were called, became staples in travel literature in the postbellum era. The average roustabout was a "strong black fellow, who has probably been a slave," one 1874 journalist observed. He frequented "low dens" and "squanders his hard earned money." With "no bedding or blanket to protect him from the cold when asleep," the roustabout was constantly on call, often "obliged to work 36 hours or longer without rest except for meals."²⁰² Indeed, roustabouts were often viewed as "perhaps the lowest class of labor," driven "like beasts by their overseers—degradation causing brutality and brutality causing degradation," in the words of one late 19th century writer sympathetic to their plight.²⁰³ As late as 1940, novelist and river writer Ben Lucien Burman described the Mississippi river roustabouts as having "little changed with time."²⁰⁴ Yet much had changed, for the steamboats' golden age was short-lived. By mid-century, the railroad was competing with river steamboats, replacing them as less expensive means of moving agricultural and other products to designated markets.

1934); Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *The Rise of New York Port [1815-1860]* (1939; rpt. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1967), 143-64.

²⁰¹ Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 442-78.

²⁰² "The Roustabouts of the Mississippi," *New Orleans Republican*, August 2, 1874. Also see Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 103-06.

²⁰³ Charles B. Spahr, "America's Working People. IV. The Negro as an Industrial Factor," *The Outlook* (6 May 1899), 35.

²⁰⁴ Ben Lucien Burman, *Big River to Cross: Mississippi Life Today* (Garden City, New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1943).

ON THE WATERFRONT: PORT LABOR IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

The maritime and transportation labor force of port cities from the colonial era through the early 20th century was heterogeneous. In the pre-Civil War era, various combinations of free and unfree laborers performed unskilled dock work. In colonial New York, Ira Berlin found, slave "hiredlings along with those bondsmen owned by merchants, warehouse keepers, and ship chandlers kept Northern cities moving," with many slaves working in "the maritime trades not only as sailors on coasting vessels, but also in the rope walks, shipyards, and sail factories that supported the colonial maritime industry."²⁰⁵ After the American Revolution, an expanding industrial sector barred most blacks, leaving a small number to work as independent artisans, shop keepers, and professionals, and others to work at the "bottom of the job hierarchy," in Nash's words, as domestic servants and common laborers.²⁰⁶ Black men served on ships. In the 19th century, they "consistently signed aboard ship in disproportionately large numbers relative to their strength in the northern states' populations as a whole." (Historian W. Jeffery Bolster has found that between 17-22 percent of Philadelphia's seafaring jobs between 1800 and 1820 were occupied by blacks, at a time when they constituted roughly 5 percent of the area's population.)²⁰⁷ During the antebellum era and the Civil War, a black boarding house owner, William P. Powell, served as a supplier of African-American maritime labor to ship captains and the U.S. Navy. His Colored Sailor's Home in New York, opened in 1839 and sponsored by the American Seamen's Friend Society (a reform organization which created alternatives to exploitative boardinghouses), offered refuge, by its own estimate, to 6,533 African-American sailors during a 12-year period. During the Civil War, a re-opened home, located at No. 2 Cherry Street in New York, served some 500 black sailors before being ransacked by a white mob on the first day of the July 1863 draft riots.²⁰⁸

On the docks of the ports of the Atlantic and Gulf, however, racial conflict was sharpest. By the 1840s, free black workers along the Philadelphia waterfront competed with Irish immigrants, leading one contemporary to observe that "there may be and undoubtedly is, a direct competition" between African Americans and the Irish. "The wharves and new buildings attest to this, in the person of our stevedores and hod carriers as does all places of labor; and when a few years ago we saw none but Blacks, we now see nothing but Irish."²⁰⁹ During the Civil War, racial violence erupted on the docks of New York. Irish longshoremen (who by then dominated dock work in New York) demanded that "the colored people must and shall be driven to other parts of industry,

²⁰⁵ Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *American Historical Review* 85 (February 1980), 49.

²⁰⁶ This process is described well in Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 144-52. Nash estimates that "as in the prerevolutionary decades, maritime labor also figured importantly, with probably one-fourth or more of the city's young black males making their living at sea for at least a few years.... Alternating work along the docks with shipboard labor, these black sailors...composed about 20 percent of the city's large maritime labor force" in the early 19th century, 146.

²⁰⁷ W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man: Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860,'" *Journal of American History* 76, No.4 (March 1990), 1173-1199.

²⁰⁸ James Barker Farr, *Black Odyssey: The Seafaring Traditions of Afro-Americans* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 134-35, 225, 236-38; Martha S. Putney, *Black Sailors: Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalers Prior to the Civil War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987).

²⁰⁹ Quoted in Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 157. Testimony from contemporary blacks sustains this assessment. In the late 1830s, a black paper noted that blacks "are now almost displaced as stevedores." Quoted in Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 253.

and that the work upon the docks . . . shall be attended to solely and absolutely by members of the 'Longshoremen's Association,' and such white laborers as they see fit to permit upon the premises." In the bloody rioting of July 1863, not only did whites patrol the waterfronts of Manhattan, but they burned the city's Colored Orphan Asylum and numerous black tenements and attacked and killed numerous black New Yorkers in an orgy of violence that lasted for three days.²¹⁰

Waterfronts saw a mix of African and African-American slaves and immigrants from Europe perform the crucial work of loading, unloading, and transporting goods in the pre-Civil War South. In New Orleans, slaves and free blacks competed for work with Irish and German immigrants by the 1840s and 1850s, with the latter coming to dominate sectors such as cotton screwing (involving the careful, tight packing of cotton bales with heavy jackscrews in the holds of ships) and cotton yard work (the storage and compressing of cotton bales). The longshore labor force of the post-bellum era retained—and even increased—its ethnic and racial heterogeneity. In New Orleans, African Americans and whites both labored along the docks of the Mississippi River, although one group or the other dominated certain jobs. While general longshore work and cotton yard work was divided roughly equally between blacks and whites in the late 19th century, whites dominated the skilled and better-paid category of cotton screwing, while blacks filled the ranks of teamsters and loaders, round freight teamsters, and Mississippi River roustabouts. In Mobile, a very different segmented employment structure shaped the racial character of dock work. For example, skilled white workers occupied the top of Mobile's occupational hierarchy, loading timber from lighters in the river onto ships, while black workers loaded lumber on the docks and performed all of the port's coastwise work (earning roughly half the wages of whites).²¹¹ In early 20th century New York, investigator Charles Barnes reported that longshoremen "are of many races, of many nations," including Irish, Italians, Poles, African Americans, as well as Russian Jews, Greeks, and French Canadians. At the same time, one observer noted that the "stevedores of Baltimore are of many nationalities," including the Irish, Poles, Germans, and blacks.²¹²

²¹⁰ The quote, and the best account of the riot, is found in Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 27-28; 117-118.

²¹¹ Testimony of John B. Waterman, Manager for Elder-Demster Steamship Company in Mobile, in Minutes of Investigation Held in the City of Mobile, Ala., Saturday, February 8th, 1908, in Gilmore Papers, Special Collections, Tulane University.

²¹² Barnes, *The Longshoremen*, 4; Charles G. Girelius, "A Baltimore Strike and What it Brought", *The Survey*, 3 August 1912. How have longshoremen fared in the historiographical literature? John R. Commons was perhaps the first to study the men who worked along the shore. In his 1905 article on "The Longshoremen of the Great Lakes," Commons reconstructed the hiring patterns of ore shovelers and lumber unloaders, emphasizing both the ethnic diversity (along the Great Lakes, for example, the longshore labor force included Croatians, Poles, Germans, and Irish) and the rise of union locals of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA). Ten years later, Charles Barnes' *The Longshoremen* became the first full-length study of these workers. The director of New York State Public Employment Bureau, Barnes was concerned not only with documenting the conditions of longshore labor but reforming its harsher qualities in an effort to relieve "distress and dislocation." The "most conspicuous fact concerning the longshoreman is his inconspicuousness," Barnes observed. "Libraries, statistical reports, labor histories almost without exception ignore him or misstate his case." Struck by the lack of official data from the municipality of New York, early labor historians, and the press, Barnes conducted interviews with workers and managers, attended meetings, and gathered records to compile the first comprehensive portrait of longshore labor in the United States. His findings constituted an indictment of the conditions of labor—particularly what he called the "evils of casual work," which encouraged "irregular habits and drinking"—and a call for reform—namely protective legislation and the "de-casualization" of labor modeled on European examples. Charles Barnes, *The Longshoremen*

Longshore Unions

Waterfront trade unionism's roots are found in workers' benevolent societies, which attended to members' needs for sick and death benefits in the early 19th century. Irregular work, excessive competition for available jobs, low wages, and poor conditions gave rise to intermittent labor activism on the part of local associations. As early as 1825, New York longshoremen engaged in a strike for higher wages by tying up nearly all ships in port, as workers flocked to join the "general combination."²¹³ On the West Coast, an 1851 strike was followed two years later by the formation of the Riggers' and Stevedores' Union Association in San Francisco. Along the South Atlantic coast, the all-black Longshoremen's Protective Union Association of Charleston, South Carolina, emerged in 1867, while along the Gulf Coast, Galveston's Longshoremen's Benevolent Association, that city's first black trade union, was founded in 1870. That same year, lumber handlers in Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan, formed their own locals.²¹⁴ Local associations of dockers appeared in most port cities in the 19th century, with varying degrees of longevity and success in protecting members, securing employment, improving conditions, and raising wages.

But it wasn't until the end of the century that a national body emerged with the goal of uniting disparate longshore locals. In 1892, representatives of some 10 lumber handlers unions on the Great Lakes met in Detroit to found a National Longshoremen's Association of the U.S.; the new body's name was changed to the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in 1895. The ILA claimed 40,000 members in about 250 locals by the turn of the century. The ILA's power proved to be geographically uneven, and its influence waxed and waned over time. In the first two decades of the 20th century, the ILA was strongest on the Great Lakes and in some southern ports; its influence in the nation's largest port, New York, proved elusive. However, the World War I years afforded new opportunities as federal involvement in labor-management relations produced a mediation body—the National Adjustment Commission—which granted ILA representatives a degree of power and encouraged employers to bargain peacefully with their workers to avoid costly disputes that might harm the American war effort. But the end of the war brought an end to the peaceful adjustment of disputes. Workers seeking higher wages to match

(New York: Survey Associates, 1915), v, 170; Charles P. Larrowe, *Shape-Up and Hiring Hall: A Comparison of Hiring Methods and Labor Relations on the New York and Seattle Waterfronts*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955). In the decades following Commons' article and Barnes' book, little scholarship on longshore labor appeared. In 1955, Charles P. Larrowe published his *Shape-Up and Hiring Hall*, a comparative study of employment practices and hiring methods on the docks of Seattle and New York (by far the nation's largest port). Maud Russell's *Men Along the Shore: The I.L.A. and its History*, which appeared in 1966, was a popular and sketchy history of the International Longshoremen's Association. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, longshore workers began to receive detailed scholarly attention by the practitioners of the new labor history. See Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*; Daniel Rosenberg, *New Orleans Dockworkers: Race, Labor, and Unionism 1892-1923* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). In addition, information on New Orleans waterfront unionism can be found in: Joy Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress 1880-1896* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969); Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (1931; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1969); David Paul Bennetts, "Black and White Workers: New Orleans 1880-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972).

²¹³ Albion, *The Rise of New York Port [1815-1860]*, 223-24.

²¹⁴ Lester Rubin and William S. Swift, "The Negro in the Longshore Industry," in Lester Rubin, William S. Swift, and Herbert R. Northrup, *Negro Employment in the Maritime Industries: A Study of Racial Policies in the Shipbuilding, Longshore, and Offshore Maritime Industries* (Philadelphia: Industrial Research Unit, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 1974), 15-16; Charles P. Larrowe, *Maritime Labor Relations on the Great Lakes* (East Lansing: Labor and Industrial Relations Center, Michigan State University, 1959), 15.

the escalating cost of living clashed with employers who sought to roll back workers' wartime gains. When the government sided with employers, numerous ILA locals on the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic coasts were destroyed, and the ILA's influence was diminished. Tainted by corruption, the ILA earned a reputation for conservatism and was challenged by a new generation of militant unionists in the 1930s. By the 1960s, new technologies—especially the advent of containerization—reduced the need for unskilled cargo loaders and unloaders.²¹⁵

The history of longshoremen in the postbellum South follows a different path from that of northern dock workers. If both regions witnessed bloody racial clashes, certain areas along the Gulf developed a record of interracial collaboration and even solidarity. The example of labor along the Mississippi River waterfront of New Orleans illustrates the persistence of racial inequality as well as new forms of cooperation across racial lines.

Following the overthrow of Reconstruction in Louisiana and the ending of the 1870s depression, waterfront unionism expanded. By the early 1880s, locals of white longshoremen, cotton screwmen, and cotton yardmen and locals of black longshoremen, screwmen, yardmen, teamsters and loaders, and round freight handlers had emerged. Unionism on the Crescent City docks—like that on all waterfronts in the American South—followed strict racial lines. Biracial unionism involved the creation of all-black and all-white locals, even in the same trade. The achievement of dock workers in the 1880s was that they managed to form an alliance that encouraged both blacks and whites and, in some cases, workers from different waterfront crafts, to work together.

The emergence of the Cotton Men's Executive Council in December 1880 represented a turning point in both waterfront labor relations and southern race relations. The Council, composed of unions representing roughly 13,000 men, was a "solid organization of the labor element embracing every class employed in handling the staple from the time of its reception until it is stored in the ship's hold," as one local newspaper said. Over the course of the 1880s, the Council presided over a shift in power from employers to workers on the docks. In essence, the largest levee unions "wrested control of the labor supply from their employers, implemented complex conference rules defining the conditions of their labor, and received what were probably the highest longshore wages in the country."²¹⁶ Such accomplishments were possible because of several factors. First, a Democratic party machine dependent upon white labor's votes adopted a hands-off approach to labor conflicts, refusing to support employers' efforts to break strikes and depriving them of an important weapon in the usual arsenal against labor. Second and more important, autonomous black trade unions emerged out of the city's black social network to offer members protection against both white employers and employees, making it difficult for white labor to exclude blacks from the labor market and making it necessary for white labor to enter into collaborative arrangements with blacks instead. The black cotton screwmen, whose hall on Burgundy Street between St. Anthony and Bagatelle was constructed in 1889, and black Longshoremen's Protective Union and Benevolent Association, which met in Longshoremen's Hall on Perdido Street, were pillars of the black community. Well after the final collapse of the biracial alliance in 1923, General Longshore Workers, Local Union 1419 operated what one black monthly called an "imposing and stately labor temple"—located at 518 S. Rampart

²¹⁵ John R. Commons, "The Longshoremen of the Great Lakes," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (November 1905); Maud Russell, *Men along the Shore: The I.L.A. and its History* (New York: Brussell & Brussell, 1966), 65.

²¹⁶ Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans*, 74.

Street—symbolizing the powerful role of black labor in the "mighty longshoremen's union of the United States."²¹⁷

The construction of a biracial movement allowed participants to neutralize or "handle," if not eliminate, racial tensions, constituting an arena in which whites and blacks could work together. Biracial unions adhered to the norms of segregation—racially distinct locals represented blacks and whites—but, when the system functioned well, leaders jointly conducted negotiating sessions with employers, and members adhered to identical work rules and wage rates, ratified contracts, and, when necessary, struck side by side.²¹⁸

The impressive biracial labor solidarity of the Gilded Age did not survive the rising tide of southern white racism and the onset of the century's most severe economic depression in 1893. Only two years after the 1892 general strike, the high point of a decade of biracial unionism, the waterfront of the Crescent City witnessed outbreaks of violence by white longshoremen and screwmen against their black counterparts. In late October 1894, between 150 and 200 armed and masked white men targeted black screwmen unloading six ships on Front Street; they soon controlled the levee from 2nd to 7th Streets, boarding ships and destroying the tools of black workers. Months later, in March 1895, hundreds of armed whites destroyed tools used by black employees of the West India and Pacific Steamship Company in an attack on the Morris Public Bathhouse, located at the head of St. Andrew Street. Additional fighting occurred opposite the French Market between St. Anne and Dumaine Streets. Bloody rioting in the fall of 1894 and the spring of 1895 ended with the occupation of the waterfront by the state militia, the destruction of what remained of the biracial alliance, the lowering of wages, the elimination of union work rules, and the collapse of union influence. By acting to secure a greater portion of available work, white workers destroyed the alliance that permitted them to secure benefits in the first place.

That, however, was not the end of the story. Shortly after the turn of the century, waterfront workers in New Orleans reconstructed their inter-trade and biracial movement, reimposed and extended control over the labor supply and conditions of work, and considerably reduced racial competition and hostility. From its founding in 1901 to its destruction at the hands of the New Orleans Steamship Association in 1923, the Dock and Cotton Council stood out as one of the single most important exceptions to the custom and practice of Jim Crow in the U.S. Even the white cotton screwmen—the so-called "aristocrats of the levee" who had restricted black employment in their trade to a mere 20 gangs a day in the 1880s—accepted the principle of biracialism. They agreed to an "amalgamation" (alliance) with black counterparts, the sharing of all work equally, and even the integration of work gangs (to prevent employers from pitting black screwmen against white). Their efforts were resisted at every turn. Strikes in the fall of 1902 and 1903 centered on employers' rejection of the new "half-and-half rule" as a violation of their managerial rights. A renewal of conflict in 1907 again pitted stevedores and shipping agents

²¹⁷ "Colored Screwmen. Ceremonies Attending the Laying of the Corner-Stone of their Building," *New Orleans Pelican*, June 8, 1889; "Sepia South's Big Labor Temple," *Color*, 4, No. 1 (February 1948).

²¹⁸ Not all waterfront workers participated in the same way in this system. In the 1880s and early 1890s, white cotton screwmen, unlike white longshoremen, refused to share jobs equally with blacks. The strongest and most influential of dock workers, white screwmen had the power to limit the number of black screwmen employed daily to a maximum of 100. Black and white screwmen, then, were part of a biracial system, but it was one that reinforced the dominant position of whites.

against the two screwmen's unions. Each time, longshore workers' power remained intact and the biracial coalition remained firm. Only after a series of large-scale strikes in 1919, 1921, and 1923 did the Council, and the biracialism that sustained it, finally collapse. The anti-labor open shop of the port's employers succeeded in putting an end to both union power and amicable waterfront race relations after more than two decades of success.

Several issues stand out in New Orleans waterfront workers' experience in the early 20th century. First, in contrast to the behavior of craft unions of skilled workers in other sectors of the city's economy, white dock workers (including the skilled screwmen) abandoned a whites-only approach and made common cause with blacks at the point of production. The city's Central Trades and Labor Council, established in 1898, was off limits to blacks, and most craft union internationals affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) barred black members or restricted their membership. The Dock and Cotton Council, and the unions in such trades as cotton screwing, longshoring, and cotton yard work, followed a path at odds with the segregation and exclusion of the dominant labor movement. Second, unskilled waterfront workers demonstrated concern with the same issues of "workers' control" of production that motivated skilled craftsmen and industrial workers. Not unlike the "autonomous craftsman" whose functional autonomy, skill, and knowledge enabled him to direct the process of labor with little interference from employers (described so well by David Montgomery),²¹⁹ unskilled waterfront workers advanced a vision of their place on the docks that clashed with the vision put forth by stevedores and shipping agents. In the early 20th century, dock workers insisted that they knew best how to load and unload cargo, declaring that they would take orders not from managers but only from union foremen familiar with the job. Third, the road to dock labor's control over the labor force lay in biracial alliance. Having learned the lesson of racial discord in the 1890s, whites recognized that their only chance for success lay in putting aside their prejudices and according blacks an equal place in a waterfront labor movement.

New Orleans was not alone in developing black unions and biracial union structures to govern race relations on the docks. But the forms that biracial unionism assumed varied from port to port. Galveston, New Orleans' primary commercial rival on the Gulf, witnessed far fewer large-scale labor conflicts than New Orleans, and its biracial unionism generated less cooperation between blacks and whites.²²⁰ By the early 20th century, large and powerful railroad companies placed real limits on labor's influence, dominating the waterfronts of Mobile, Pensacola, and

²¹⁹ David Montgomery, "Workers' Control of Machine Production in the 19th Century," in *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9-47.

²²⁰ On the port of Galveston, see: David G. McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin, 1986); Bradley Robert Rice, *Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America, 1901-1920* (Austin, 1977), 3-18. On longshore labor in Galveston, see: Allen Clayton Taylor, "A History of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association from 1865 to 1924" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 1968); James V. Reese, "The Evolution of an Early Texas Union: The Screwmen's Benevolent Association of Galveston, 1866-1891", *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LXXV, 2 (October 1971); Taylor, "A History of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association"; Ruth Allen, *Chapters in the History of Organized Labor in Texas* (Austin, 1941); Virginia Neal Hinze, "Norris Wright Cuney" (M.A. thesis, Rice University, 1965); Lawrence D. Rice, *The Negro in Texas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Maud Cuney Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People* (New York, 1913); Kenneth Kann, "The Knights of Labor and the Southern Black Worker," *Labor History* 18 (Winter 1977), 56-57; William Joseph Brophy, *The Black Texas, 1900-1950: A Quantitative History* (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, 1974), 157-162; James C. Maroney, "The Galveston Longshoremen's Strike of 1920", *East Texas Historical Journal* XVI, No. 1 (1978), 34-38.

Savannah. In Mobile, a segmented employment structure involved blacks and whites laboring in different sectors, handling different products at different rates of pay. Whites occupied the best paying jobs as loaders of timber (from lighters in the river onto ships) and screwers of cotton. Black workers loaded lumber on the docks and performed all of the port's coastwise work, earning about half the wages (about 25 cents an hour in the early 20th century) of the white timbermen and screwmen.²²¹ Organized in locals affiliated with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), blacks and whites collaborated in biracial arrangements that fell short of the New Orleans model, but remained exceptional by the racial standards of the South. In some places, interracial collaboration survived the strike wave of 1923, when longshoremen, and in some cases, screwmen, struck without success in Gulfport, Biloxi, Mobile, Pensacola, Galveston, and Houston.²²²

For West Coast longshoremen, the most significant breakthrough in union recognition, wage increases, and improved working conditions came during the Great Depression of the 1930s. At the start of that decade, San Francisco maritime workers were a defeated lot. "Virtually everyone regarded the seamen's conditions of life and work as deplorable," historian Bruce Nelson observed.²²³ The influence and power of the International Seamen's Union (ISU) and the ILA had been eliminated in the titanic post-World War I labor clashes with ship owners and contracting stevedores. The open shop, crowded labor markets, and powerful employers combined to produce low wages, harsh conditions, company unions, and powerless AFL unions.

²²¹ Melton McLaurin and Michael Thomason, *Mobile: The Life and Times of a Great Southern City*, (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1981), 80-81; "Port Facilities: The Port of Mobile, Ala." *Merchant Fleet News*, 1, No. 6 (December 1927), 6; David Ernest Alsobrook, "Alabama's Port City: Mobile During the Progressive Era, 1896-1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, Auburn University, 1983); "The Progress of the Negro Race in Mobile", *Mobile Register 100th Anniversary & 74th Annual Trade Review 1814-1914: The Gateway to Panama* (at Mobile Public Library); C.F. Johnson, "The Colored People of Mobile", *Mobile Register*, 1 September 1900.

²²² Longshore workers in Houston implemented a biracial system shortly after that port opened in 1913. By 1916, black local 872 and white local 896 divided all work and foremen's positions equally "in order that any and all friction, or labor trouble be avoided." In that year, the Mallory Steamship Company, long hostile to organized labor, "paying the lowest possible wage scale...and treating their employees in a most inhuman manner," discharged its white union workers, instead offering to employ members of the black local alongside black non-union men. The black union rejected the deal, and the company locked out both the black and white unions. There is evidence, however, that black and white gangs worked side by side, at least for other firms, through the 1920s. See "*Houston, Texas*", *The Longshoreman* (August 10, 1916), 2; "*Report of J.H. Fricke*", *The Longshoreman* (September 1916), 3; "A Brief History of I.L.A. Local 872", AR#8, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington. Ruth Allen notes that in the mid-teens the two locals entered into a 99-year agreement to divide equally all work. Allen, *Chapters in the History of Organized Labor in Texas*, 193-94. Race and labor relations in the East Texas longshore trade are described colorfully in the fine autobiography of a retired longshoreman and labor activist. See: Gilbert Mers, *Working the Waterfront: The Ups and Downs of a Rebel Longshoreman* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

²²³ Bruce Nelson's 1988 award-winning *Workers on the Waterfront* chronicles the struggles of West Coast maritime workers in the 1930s. Taking exception to one tendency within labor historiography that emphasizes the "narrow, episodic character of worker militancy" in the 1930s and the "primacy of a deeply rooted social inertia beneath the turbulent surface of events" in that decade, Nelson insists that the study of "insurgent activity and consciousness of maritime workers" during the depression provides a very different picture of labor activism in that decade. Not only were the 1930s not the "not so 'turbulent years'", as historian Melvyn Dubofsky once called them, but they gave rise to a militant unionism that combined "porkchops" and politics and resembled a "constant state of guerilla warfare." For West Coast maritime labor, the 1930s were a "Pentecostal era." Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1, 18.

All that changed with the coming of the New Deal. San Francisco dock workers drew inspiration from the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933. They repudiated the "blue book" company unionism of the past decade and instead turned to the ILA, breathing life into the all-but-dead locals of the International. While leftists, especially Communists, offered inspiration and needed skills, maritime workers manifested their own "mood of syndicalism," Nelson argues, which grew upon thriving remnants of an earlier Wobbly (as the Industrial Workers of the World were called) subculture. This mood, or subculture, had several sources. First, it rested upon maritime workers' worldliness. As worldwide travelers, seamen (themselves oppressed) witnessed firsthand injustice in ports around the world, heightening a politicized international perspective. Second, as men who lived life on society's fringes, they had little access to such stable institutions as the family or church. Inclined toward radicalism and inspired by the New Deal and by militant leftists, West Coast maritime workers took matters in their own hands in 1934.

The "Pentacostal Era" began with the General Strike in San Francisco in 1934, one of the most important events of the decade. In defiance of top ILA and AFL officials, as many as 12,000 longshore workers on the West Coast took on employers, the company union, armed vigilantes, and city and state governments. The climax occurred on July 5, the 58th day of the strike, known as "Bloody Thursday." Police attacked strikers with tear gas, pushed them back toward the strike's headquarters near Mission and Steuart Streets, and fired into a crowd of picketers, killing two men. Days later, protests against the killings brought out 10,000 strike sympathizers in a mass funeral march that extended down Market Street from the Embarcadero to Valencia. In mid-July, the "laboring population" of San Francisco "laid down its tools in a General Strike," in participant Mike Quin's words. The four-day protest involved some 127,000 workers.²²⁴

Although the strike's settlement represented no clear-cut victory for the strikers, events in its aftermath reshaped labor relations on the waterfront to dock workers' advantage. The rank and file transformed a "premature and inconclusive settlement" into a "virtual revolution in work relations and practices on docks and ships" by resorting to brief work stoppages protesting the pace of work, the presence of scabs in work crews, the weight of sling loads, and the nature of relations between workers and their managers.²²⁵ In the "Syndicalist Renaissance" that followed, longshoremen broke away from the conservative, autocratic, and often corrupt ILA to form a new, militant, and democratic International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), which soon affiliated with the newly-established Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Maritime workers' accomplishments were impressive. They made work units 100 percent union, assumed control of hiring through the elimination of the hated shape-up and the creation of union hiring halls, empowered union delegates with authority at the workplace, slowed the pace of work, eliminated fear on the job, and engaged in political issues beyond the "point of production." The era had witnessed the emergence of a "new order," not only in power relations on the job, but in the men's conceptions of themselves as workers and as citizens. The

²²⁴ Mike Quin, *The Big Strike* (1949; rpt. New York: International Publishers, 1979), 3. Nelson identifies four crucial threads that accounted for the "Big Strike's dynamism:" the strikers' "militancy, steadfastness, and discipline" against a determined, powerful, and violent opponent; a "solidarity that swept aside old craft antagonisms;" a "rank-and-file independence and initiative" that included "frequent defiance of AFL norms and officials;" a "willingness to assess the Red presence in the strike independently," and a refusal to succumb to "red-baiting." Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 128. The 1934 General Strike's 50th anniversary was commemorated by the ILWU by murals located at Steuart and Mission.

²²⁵ Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 150.

ILWU is portrayed by Bruce Nelson (and others) as a heroic movement that put an end to long-standing abuses of employers and overturned the weak and accommodationist unionism of the ILA, replacing it with a democratic, and even radical, unionism.

The upheavals of the 1930s had less impact on the waterfronts of the Atlantic coast. In the East, and particularly in New York, the ILA remained a bastion of conservatism and corruption.²²⁶ Under the heavy-handed rule of Joseph ("King Joe") Ryan, the ILA offered no militant challenge to low wages and harsh conditions, refrained from striking (in contrast to the guerrilla warfare on the docks of the West), and established links with organized crime. Sociologist Howard Kimeldorf argues that understanding the historic patterns of occupational recruitment, employers' responses to unionization, and radicals' strategies helps to account for the differences between the two regions and their unions. Eastern dock workers were ethnically heterogeneous and culturally conservative (in many cases under the influence of the Catholic Church). They identified with immigrant neighborhoods and spurned militant unionism of the Wobblies. On the West Coast, dock workers were often former loggers or seamen; isolated from the dominant culture, they were more cosmopolitan and receptive to syndicalism. Moreover, the unified West Coast employers' all-out opposition to unions fed the syndicalist impulse in the West, while Eastern employers remained divided and tolerated a weak ILA.

Even a progressive union like the ILWU was inconsistent on the issue of racial equality. Pacific coast longshoremen fashioned "one of the most democratic labor unions in the country" whose cornerstone was "rank-and-file control of membership requirements, work rules, administrative structure of the union, and especially the hiring process," in Nancy Quam-Wickam's words.²²⁷ But the union's sterling reputation on race relations has been called into question recently. The union's ability to screen applicants for jobs through their union hall dispatcher "vested tremendous power in the local union," she argues. Yet despite—or perhaps because of—such democratic control, a white majority could exercise its power to discriminate against African-American dock workers. During the Second World War, expanded shipping required a larger workforce, and non-whites—blacks and Mexican Americans in particular—entered the field in growing numbers. Rank-and-file whites, including the men of the formative "Generation of '34" that had brought about the revolution on the waterfront, were resentful of non-white newcomers, and engaged in "slowdowns and work stoppages" to resist the "entry or promotion of minority workers." ILWU leaders denounced racial discrimination, promoted larger civil rights issues, and "supported the hiring of black workers."²²⁸ But in practice, white rank-and-file opposition limited their options, marring the organization's record on race relations.

In an important essay entitled "Class and Race in the Crescent City,"²²⁹ Bruce Nelson picks up the New Orleans story. In the aftermath of what black social scientists Abram Harris and

²²⁶ Howard Kimeldorf, *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

²²⁷ Nancy Quam-Wickham, "Who Controls the Hiring Hall? The Struggle for Job Control in the ILWU During World War II," in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 48-49. Recently, Bruce Nelson too has adopted this perspective emphasizing the racial exclusion practiced by white dockers on the west coast. See Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

²²⁸ Quam-Wickham, "Who Controls the Hiring Hall?" 60, 64.

²²⁹ Bruce Nelson, "Class and Race in the Crescent City: The ILWU, from San Francisco to New Orleans," in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 19-45.

Sterling Spero called the "disastrous defeat for organized labor" in 1923, conditions deteriorated rapidly. Once again, wage rates fell, union work rules were repealed, race relations grew tense, and employer coercion increased—conditions that only worsened with the onset of the Great Depression. Fresh from their victories on the West Coast, left-wing ILWU organizers turned their attention to the Gulf Coast, and New Orleans in particular, in 1937. The arrival of "courageous and seasoned organizers" gave New Orleans dockers a choice between sticking with the weak, ineffectual ILA locals in the AFL, or turning to the militant, interracial (as opposed to biracial) ILWU in the new CIO.

Expecting to gain support quickly from downtrodden African-American dock workers, ILWU organizers were in for a rude awakening. The AFL and ILA responded by "pouring men and money" into the contest for the men's allegiance, at the same time that the ILA dispatched its "big time beef squad" to employ "goon tactics" against CIO supporters. Worse still, city officials who had "decided it was time to break the CIO once and for all" unleashed a "systematic reign of police terror."²³⁰ Unlike the more conservative ILA, the ILWU threatened both employers' power and regional racial mores. The "AFL became the lesser of two evils," as employers and the state united to crush the interracial challenge. In the end, the ILWU went down, losing a 1939 National Labor Relations Board election to the ILA. But the ILWU failure cannot be attributed to repression alone. Organizers, in Nelson's opinion, underestimated the attachment of black dockers to their own ILA locals and overestimated the appeal of interracial unionism. However weak black locals might have been, they had a long history and retained the allegiance of many members; at the same time, blacks remained suspicious of whites—especially out-of-town whites with a radical agenda. While intimidation was "a major factor among the longshoreman, they seem to have been motivated also by a cautious pragmatism, by a sense of racial solidarity, and perhaps above all by a distrust of whites stemming from the legacy of racial competition" for a place on the docks.²³¹

Maritime Workers

Like longshoremen, sailors and seamen found efforts to impose order on their crafts and improve conditions blocked by powerful employers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Seamen had many common complaints. Laboring under strict federal laws governing behavior and discipline, they were required to pledge obedience to ships' captains before setting sail (in effect, abandoning personal liberties available to other workers and other American citizens) and were subject to severe punishment for failure to follow orders. (Under federal law, seamen could be imprisoned if convicted of deserting ship.) In the 1897 *Arago* case, the Supreme Court upheld the practice of depriving seamen of wages if they deserted. Although the "merchant seaman is a civilian," Elmo Paul Hohman observed in 1938, "in many respects his life resembles that of a soldier."²³² Living conditions were cramped and often dirty, wages low, and the hours of work long. On shore, seamen complained of the crimping system, whereby shipping masters or boardinghouse owners (crimps) who controlled hiring, required men to stay at their boardinghouses and eat and drink in their saloons, receiving an advance on seamen's wages. Although the LaFollette Seamen's Act of

²³⁰ Ibid., 31.

²³¹ Ibid., 37.

²³² Elmo Paul Hohman, *History of American Merchant Seamen* (Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, 1959), 20 (reprinted from the *International Labour Review* XXXVIII, Nos. 2 and 3, August and September 1938). In the *Arago* case, the Court also exempted seamen from the 13th Amendment's ban on involuntary servitude.

1915 provided a limited corrective to some abuses—particularly imprisonment for desertion from port—protests against low wages, harsh treatment, and crowded labor markets continued.

The 19th century witnessed the emergence and collapse of numerous efforts at unionization by seamen. Targeting the crimping system and promoting a 12-hour day and higher wages, unions failed to take root until the century's end. The Lake Seamen's Union, which became the nation's "first permanent union of merchant seamen" when it was founded in 1878, affiliated with the International Seamen's Union (ISU, established in 1895). On the West Coast, the Marine Firemen, Oilers and Watertenders' Union of the Pacific formed in 1883, the Sailors' Union of the Pacific in 1885, and the Marine Cooks and Stewards' Union of the Pacific in 1901. Added to the list of demands, particularly for the International Seamen's Union, was the exclusion of Chinese and Japanese seamen from the maritime labor force. While World War One provided a boon to union membership for seamen (as for longshoremen), the post-war era witnessed the elimination of many gains. Supportive federal officials turned hostile, cooperating with employers to crush a massive strike in 1921, ushering in a 12-year long era of the open shop. By one estimate, the ISU's membership, which topped at about 100,000 in 1918, fell to just 14,000 in 1929. In the 1930s, seamen's unionism experienced another turnabout as the National Maritime Union assumed union leadership from the weak ISU, especially on the East coast.²³³

RAILROADS IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

The history of railroads encapsulates much of the myth and reality of American history. For Steward H. Holbrook in 1947, railroads not only "created a dreamworld for boys of my generation," but their "main achievement . . . was to help enormously to build the United States into a world power and do it well within the span of one man's lifetime."²³⁴ In the recent words of James D. Dilts, "Railroads . . . epitomized progress, not only in the development and extension of the Western frontier but in the revelation that personal travel and the delivery of freight could be dramatically faster, better, and cheaper."²³⁵

The occupational structure of the American railroad labor force was complex. The operating trades (also known as the running trades) included those men who operated the locomotive. These men held privileged positions. At the top of the job ladder were conductors and engineers, who commanded the highest wages and exercised authority. In charge of the train's operation, the conductor oversaw both personnel and freight. The conductor, observed railroader turned sociologist W. Fred Cottrell in 1940, acted as a kind of "traveling clerk who combines with his book work sufficient mechanical knowledge."²³⁶ Experienced engineers directed the technical

²³³ Betty V. H. Schneider, *Industrial Relations in the West Coast Maritime Industry* (Berkeley: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1958); Joseph P. Goldberg, *The Maritime Story: A Study in Labor-Management Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958); William L. Standard, *Merchant Seamen: A Short History of Their Struggles* (New York: International Publishers, 1947); William S. Swift, "The Negro in the Offshore Maritime Industry," in Lester Rubin, William S. Swift, and Herbert R. Northrup, eds., *Negro Employment in the Maritime Industries: A Study of Racial Policies in the Shipbuilding, Longshore, and Offshore Maritime Industries* (Philadelphia: Industrial Research Unit, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 1974), 38-40.

²³⁴ Stewart H. Holbrook, *The Story of American Railroads* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), 3.

²³⁵ James D. Dilts, *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828-1853* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 2.

²³⁶ Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in 19th-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 105-06; W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader* (Stanford University Press, 1940), 18.

operation of the train, while locomotive firemen, performing what one union official described in 1908 as the "hardest manual labor known to men," requiring "muscle and . . . the use of his brain,"²³⁷ rode beside him in the engine, feeding coal to the engine's insatiable boiler. Brakemen performed the dangerous work of setting hand brakes (before air brakes became more common in the 1890s) and the coupling of railroad cars with a link and pin. With time, training, experience, and a good economic climate, a fireman could rise to become an engineer, while a brakeman could eventually become a conductor.

Railroad workers in the operating trades began to organize in the 1860s and 1870s. The railroad brotherhoods, as the unions were called, grew out of workers' need to address health, safety, and other concerns. High injury and mortality rates led railroad workers to form benevolent societies that administered death and medical benefit programs for members and their families. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors struggled with employers for official recognition, improved wages and conditions, and promotions according to seniority. Through World War I, the brotherhoods advocated conservative principles and refrained from entering alliances with other groups of workers, in and out of the industry. In 1916, the brotherhoods' combined power forced the congressional passage of the Adamson Act, which limited the working day to eight hours.²³⁸

The American railway labor force was segmented along racial and ethnic lines. Engineers and conductors in the operating trades were an ethnically homogeneous lot. In his social profile of the first two generations of railroad labor in the mid-19th century, Historian Walter Licht found that native-born whites, often from rural backgrounds, were clustered at the top as conductors, engineers, firemen and brakemen, while Irish and German immigrants were concentrated at the bottom, in construction and maintenance-of-way.²³⁹ By the century's end, these "old immigrants" had moved up the scale, replaced in the maintenance-of-way and construction departments by "new" immigrants. Throughout the nation, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, founded in 1863 as both a fraternal association and a union, was open only to whites. Even where the Brotherhood had no contract, no railroad manager was willing to place African Americans in

²³⁷ *Report, Grand Master, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, 11th Biennial Convention, Columbus, Ohio* (September 1908), 154.

²³⁸ Two excellent studies of railroad labor have appeared over the past decade and a half that focus not so much on labor conflict (although that issue is addressed) as on the workers themselves. Walter Licht's *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the 19th Century* explores the "work experiences of the first two generations of American railwaymen as a case study of the first American workers in large-scale, corporately owned, bureaucratically managed work organizations." Shelton Stromquist's *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in 19th Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) examines the "political economy of railroad labor," focusing on the impact of changes in the supply of labor, the social context of railroad towns, and the evolving character of railroad labor activism and the state's response to it. Other recent works that address aspects of railroad workers' experiences include: James H. Ducker, *Men of the Steel Rails: Workers on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad 1869-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Jonathan W. McLeod, *Workers and Workplace Dynamics in Reconstruction-Era Atlanta: A Case Study* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1989). Stuart Leuthner's *The Railroaders* (New York: Random House, 1983), consists of numerous oral histories with current and retired railroad workers, while Michael G. Matejka and Greg Koo's *Bloomington's C&A Shops: Our Lives Remembered* (Bloomington: McLean County Historical Society, 1988), consists of interviews with shop workers. Also see Colin Davis, *Power at Odds: The 1922 National Railroad Shopmen's Strike* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

²³⁹ Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983).

charge of the train's operation; to do so would risk not only the engineers' wrath but also the opposition of white passengers. Similarly, in the North and Northwest, locomotive firemen and brakemen were almost entirely white as well. There, white workers drew a sharp color line (to which employers usually adhered) that barred African Americans or other non-whites from positions as locomotive firemen and brakemen; blacks were restricted to the service sector as sleeping car porters, dining car attendants, and station red caps and ushers. In the North, some companies employed blacks in the position of "porter brakemen," a category that, as its name implies, combined brakemen's tasks with on-board service to passengers.

In the South, a different racial division of labor prevailed. Although the positions of conductor and engineer remained off-limits to African Americans, black men were no strangers to operating trades. Before and after the Civil War, blacks worked as firemen and brakemen. By the 20th century, blacks made up the majority of firemen, hostlers (who handled engines inside the roundhouse yard or took them from the yard to the station), switchmen, and brakemen on the Gulf Coast lines, as well as some 90 percent of the firemen on the Seaboard Air line.²⁴⁰ Between the end of the century and 1930, blacks outnumbered whites as locomotive firemen on Georgia's railroads, holding 60 percent or more of such positions. From the 1880s onward, white firemen and brakemen imitated their northern brothers by calling for the reduction or elimination of blacks in their trades. Relying upon a wide range of tactics—petitioning managers, legislative lobbying, striking, negotiating, and even terrorism—the campaign began to see results in the 1910s. In the aftermath of World War I, contracts were negotiated with employers to drastically reduce the number of black workers and end most new black hires.²⁴¹

In the unskilled construction and maintenance-of-way divisions of the industry, non-whites dominated by the mid- and late 19th century. African Americans performed much of the unskilled labor on the South's railroads. In the antebellum era, southern railroad systems, which remained small in comparison with those of the North, relied upon slave labor to lay and maintain track. Historian Robert Starobin has concluded that enterprises engaged in internal improvements were so dependent upon slave labor that "virtually all southern railroads, except for a few border-state lines, were built either by slave-employing contractors or by company-owned or hired bondsmen," employing over 20,000 slaves. In Georgia, railroad contractors were the largest employers of unskilled black labor before and during the Civil War. Upon occasion, railroad companies purchased their own slaves; more often, they found that the demand, price, and availability of slaves for hire made it advantageous financially to rent slaves from owners on an annual basis.²⁴² In southern West Virginia, the "railroad provided more avenues for slave

²⁴⁰ *Report of the Eight-Hour Commission* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918); Edward Aaron Gaston, Jr., "A History of the Negro Wage Earner in Georgia, 1890-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1957), 237-42.

²⁴¹ Eric Arnesen, "'Like Banquo's Ghost, It Will Not Down': The Race Question and the American Railroad Brotherhoods, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994).

²⁴² Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 28; Clarence L. Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters & Slaves in Civil War Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 136-42, 164-66, 182. On the use of slaves in the construction of southern railroads, also see: Howard D. Dozier, *A History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad* (1920 rpt., New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1971), 89-90; Allen W. Trelease, *The North Carolina Railroad, 1849-1871, and the Modernization of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Stephen Ray Henson, "Industrial Workers in the Mid Nineteenth-Century South: Atlanta Railwaymen, 1840-1870" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1982), 109-14. Also see: John F. Stover, *Iron Road to the West: American Railroads in the 1850s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 65, 85, 92. William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White*

labor" beyond agriculture in the region. "Its construction provided a new market for slave owners wishing to rent out their human property," Kenneth Noe argues. "Indeed, the completed railroad functioned as a silent monument to the abilities and tenacity of black laborers who performed most of the line's construction and maintenance. Hired slaves cut wood, graded, broke up stone for ballast, laid track, and cleared snow . . . Envisioned by whites, it was black Southwest Virginians who made the dream of a mountain railroad a reality."²⁴³ Southern railroad building in the postbellum era depended upon the labor of newly-emancipated African-American men, who found wage labor on construction and track crews an attractive alternative to sharecropping on plantations.²⁴⁴

Chinese men provided much of the muscle and skill for the construction of the first railroads in the West. In California, Chinese men had worked as miners in the 1850s and early 1860s, but rising white opposition and a decline in this extractive industry led to the search for new opportunities.²⁴⁵ Railroad construction, particularly the building of the transcontinental railroad, provided a short-term answer. The California Central Railroad, connecting Sacramento and Marysville, used 50 Chinese workers in 1858, and, two years later, the San Jose Railway turned to Chinese labor.²⁴⁶ In 1862, Congress authorized the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific to complete the rail link across the continent, in part, as a Civil War measure designed to "bind the Pacific coast tier of states . . . more closely to the Union,"²⁴⁷ in Albro Martin's words. To encourage the project, it provided land grants and funds through bond sales. The race to complete the transcontinental railroad, combined with a shortage of white laborers (who, given an option, preferred mining to railroading), led managers to hire Chinese workers for basic construction in and after 1865. The Central Pacific Railroad initially hired some 50 Chinese immigrants to lay track east of Sacramento. Unable to secure sufficient white labor to blast and handle rock, drive horses, or lay track, the company soon became dependent upon the Chinese, who Central Pacific president Leland Stanford described as "quiet, peaceable, industrious, [and] economical." By 1867, the Central Pacific had 12,000 Chinese—some 90 percent of its work force—on the payroll.²⁴⁸ In Historian Ronald Takaki's words, the "construction of the Central Pacific Railroad line was a Chinese achievement . . . The Chinese workers were, in one observer's description, 'a great army laying siege to Nature in her strongest citadel.'"²⁴⁹

Quest for Racial Control 1861-1915 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 128; Jonathan W. McLeod, *Workers and Workplace Dynamics in Reconstruction Era Atlanta: A Case Study* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies and the Institute of Industrial Relations, 1989), 28-29, 33-34.

²⁴³ Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 82.

²⁴⁴ William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control 1861-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 128; McLeod, *Workers and Workplace Dynamics in Reconstruction Era Atlanta*; Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*, 28; Licht, *Working for the Railroad*, 42, 65-69.

²⁴⁵ Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 62-66.

²⁴⁶ Jack Chen, *The Chinese in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 67.

²⁴⁷ Albro Martin, *Railroads Triumphant: The Growth, Rejection, and Rebirth of a Vital American Force* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 281.

²⁴⁸ Quoted in Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 196-97; Keith L. Bryant, Jr., "Entering the Global Economy," in Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds., *The Oxford History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 217; Chen, *The Chinese in America*, 69.

²⁴⁹ Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 197. The Chinese, according to David Montgomery, "carved a path out of the perpendicular cliffs above the American River by lowering one another in wicker baskets to drill holes, set powder,

Conditions of labor were harsh. Cutting a path for railroad tracks across the almost perpendicular cliff along the face of Cape Horn in 1865 involved the lowering of Chinese workmen in baskets. Hanging by ropes, they chiseled the rockface with crowbars and hammers or drilled holes in the rock face and stuffed them with gunpowder, which usually exploded after the workmen had been pulled back up. Inclement weather did not stop work. In the severe winter of 1866, as the Chinese laborers began blasting operations with nitroglycerin for a tunnel at Donner Summit (which ultimately extended 1,695 feet long), they lived and worked in tunnels underneath snowdrifts that exceeded 60 feet. As the construction superintendent later informed federal investigators, "The snowslides carried away our camps and we lost a good many men in these slides; many of them we did not find until the next season."²⁵⁰ Despite pervasive racist assumptions and an absence of allies, Chinese railroaders in the High Sierras belied white stereotypes of docility in the spring of 1867 by engaging in what David Montgomery describes as "one of the largest-scale strikes of the century." They demanded higher pay and a reduction of hours. (As one of the strikers' leaders was said to have put it, "Eight hours a day good enough for white men, all the same good for Chinamen.") Managers broke the strike by cutting off all supplies of food and turning the work camps into prisons. "Not only this strike," Montgomery concludes, "but also the very existence of the Chinese who had built the railroad, was soon obliterated from the American consciousness." In 1869, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines met near Ogden, Utah, at Promontory Summit. No Chinese workers appeared in the famous photograph of the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and the Chinese contribution was ignored in commemorative speeches.²⁵¹ Today, at the Soda Springs exit off Interstate 80 East, the remnants of a "Chinese Wall," which originally served as a retaining wall for the railroad across the Sierra Nevada, stand as a reminder of the Chinese role in the construction of the railroad.

Even after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Chinese workers continued to constitute an important segment of the railroad labor force in California, Arizona, and Texas. The Southern Pacific Coast Railroad, for instance, relied upon Chinese workers to cross the coastal range between Santa Cruz and San Jose, California. By 1880 "Chinese railroad builders dug cuts, laid ballast, drilled tunnels, built trestles, laid track, and risked death," in the words of Sandy Lydon, "to build almost 100 miles of track" that brought Santa Cruz and Monterey counties "into the industrial age." Wright's Tunnel, which took two and a half years to complete, was the product of Chinese workers' labor. With its completion in 1880, dangerous conditions (including an oil fire in the tunnel) had claimed almost 30 lives.²⁵²

Other groups of non-whites worked as section hands and in construction. In the Pacific Northwest, where (along with California) most Japanese immigrants settled, railroad construction and maintenance and sawmills were the two largest employers of Japanese immigrant labor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Numerically significant Japanese immigration took place over

and fire it off." In his opinion, "No other railroad builders ever accomplished feats of labor as spectacular as those of the Chinese" on the Central Pacific. Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 67.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Victor G. and Brett De Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of An American Chinatown* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 41; Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 197.

²⁵¹ De Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ'*, 41-42; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 68.

²⁵² Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, California: Capitola Book Company, 1985), 79-111; Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (December 1992), 1033-1034.

a relatively short period of time, lasting from the 1890s until the 1908 "Gentlemen's Agreement" put an end to it.) The Japanese secured employment largely through Japanese labor contractors, who provided and supervised workers for American companies. In turn, those companies paid contractors a fee and provided workers only transportation and housing in the form of tents or boarding houses. The Oregon Short Line, the Southern Pacific, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and the Great Northern all relied upon Japanese contractors to fill their demand for labor at the turn of the century. According to Yuji Ichioka, a leading historian of Japanese immigrants, railroad companies employed roughly 10,000 Japanese in the West in 1909. Although initially hired as track workers, some after 1900 managed to advance to better paying positions as "roundhouse laborers, wipers, and coal heavers," according to Yuzo Murayama.²⁵³

In the American Southwest, Mexican and Mexican-American workers constituted a significant element in the railroad construction and maintenance departments by the early 20th century. Employment agencies, many of which maintained headquarters in El Paso, on the Texas-Mexico border, recruited Mexican workers on behalf of U.S. railroad companies. In 1908, Victor S. Clark observed the rapid and large increase in the amount of Mexican labor in the US: "As recently as 1900, immigrant Mexicans were seldom found more than a hundred miles from the border. Now they are working as unskilled laborers and as section hands as far east as Chicago and as far north as Iowa, Wyoming, and San Francisco . . . [They] are distributed as railway laborers over practically all of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona," as well as "California as far north as Fresno, in southern Nevada, and in Colorado."²⁵⁴ In the early 20th century, for example, the Santa Fe Railroad and other companies began recruiting Mexican men in Kansas for seasonal work as section gang laborers. On the company payroll from May to October (working on repair and maintenance crews), perhaps 70 percent of the immigrants "usually returned to Mexico" while 30 percent remained to work in other sectors of the economy (such as the sugar beet industry).²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Yuzo Murayama, "Contractors, Collusion, and Competition: Japanese Immigrant Railroad Laborers in the Pacific Northwest, 1898-1911," *Explorations in Economic History* 21, No. 3 (July 1984), 290-305; Yuji Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Labor Contractors and the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railroad Companies, 1898-1907," *Labor History* (1980), 325-350; Ichioka, "Labor-Contracting System," in Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 57-90. Also see: W. Thomas White, "Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Railroad Work Force: The Case of the Far Northwest, 1883-1918," *Western Historical Quarterly* XVI, No. 3 (July 1985), 265-83; William Thomas White, "A History of Railroad Workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1883-1934" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1981).

²⁵⁴ Victor S. Clark, "Mexican Labor in the United States," in Department of Commerce and Labor, *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* No. 78 (September 1908), 466, 477.

²⁵⁵ Robert Oppenheimer, "Acculturation or Assimilation: Mexican Immigrants in Kansas, 1900 to World War II," *Western Historical Quarterly* XVI, No. 4 (October 1985), 434-35. On Mexican and Mexican-American railroad workers, see: Victor S. Clark, "Mexican Labor in the United States," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* No. 78 (September 1908), 466, 477-82; Michael M. Smith, "Mexicans in Kansas City: The First Generation, 1900-1920," *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* 2 (1989), 32, 34-36; Daniel T. Simon, "Mexican Repatriation in East Chicago, Indiana," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* II, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 11-12; Paul S. Taylor, "Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region," *University of California Publications in Economics* 7, No. 2 (March 1932), 62-66, 82-86; Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), 8-12; Michael M. Smith, "Beyond the Borderlands: Mexican Labor in the Central Plains, 1900-1930," *Great Plains Quarterly* 1 (Fall 1981), 240, 243-44; Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). By the late 1920s, Chicago, an important center for track laborers, became the temporary destination of a growing number of Mexican workers, who secured jobs in a central employment district on Madison Street. Taylor, "Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region," 63-65.

Class conflict on the railroads—especially the major strikes of 1874, 1877, 1885-1886, 1894, 1909, and 1922—involved large numbers of workers, produced social disruption, and commanded national attention. Take the year 1877 as an example. In the fourth year of an economic depression that witnessed wage cut after wage cut, locomotive firemen and brakemen walked off their jobs on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, precipitating the largest and most disruptive strike the nation had seen. The strike began in Martinsburg, West Virginia, involving workers at the B & O Roadhouses and Shop Complex, between Martin and Race Streets. The strike spread to Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Louisville, and St. Louis. By late July, workers on all major railroad lines east of the Mississippi River were on strike. The conflict embraced other groups of workers, such as coal miners, longshoremen, mill hands, and even domestic workers. Strikers clashed with company officials and militiamen in many states. At Camden Station, near Baltimore, a crowd numbering 2,000 engaged in pitched battle with three companies of the Sixth Regiment of the Maryland National Guard. The fighting, which extended from the Centre Market to the corner of Baltimore and St. Paul Streets, resulted in the death of at least 10 people. By the time the three days of violence had ended, 13 were dead and 50 had been wounded. In Pittsburgh, strikers and sympathizers unleashed their anger at the Pennsylvania Railroad by halting all trains, clashing with 1,000 militiamen imported from Philadelphia, and setting fire to freight cars at the Union Depot (between Washington Street and 33rd Street). When the fighting was over, strike sympathizers had burned 500 freight cars, 104 locomotives, and 39 buildings. On July 19, militiamen killed 30 people at the 28th Street rail crossing in the Strip district, near the roundhouse behind Pennsylvania Station. Farther west, in Chicago, the strike began at the Michigan Central freight yards and spread rapidly. Eight thousand gathered at the roundhouse of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, before being dispersed by troops in an attack that killed three.²⁵⁶ By the time the strikes across the nation had been crushed at the hands of company guards, city police, and even the federal government, clashes were being referred to as "the insurrection."²⁵⁷

During the mid-1880s, the Knights of Labor swept tens of thousands of railway workers (officially, engineers, conductors and firemen were separately organized) into its ranks as its locals challenged some of the most powerful "robber barons" in the country. The 1885 strike began in Sedalia, Missouri, following wage cuts, increased hours, and the firing of members of the Knights. Knights assemblies representing shop workers successfully took on Jay Gould's Southwest rail system (including the Wabash, Missouri Pacific, and Missouri, Kansas and Texas railroads). In the end, they forced the robber baron to restore wages, bargain with the Order, reinstate discharged union activists, and promise no further discrimination against union members.²⁵⁸

The impact of the Knights' victory was tremendous. Tens of thousands of workers in diverse industries and trades enrolled in the Order. The following year, however, a better-prepared Gould renewed the battle with different results. In Arkansas, 15 masked strike sympathizers

²⁵⁶ Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles 1877-1934* (1936; rpt New York: Monad Press, 1974), 14, 16-18, 28.

²⁵⁷ Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (1959; rpt. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), and Philip S. Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877* (New York: Monad Press, 1977). For Foner in particular, the strike's participants consisted of crowds, not mobs (as earlier critics called them), and their actions "were not mindless riots, but rather reflections of the economic, political, and social grievances, needs, and aspirations of the...participants." Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*, 10-11.

²⁵⁸ Michael J. Cassity, "Modernization and Social Crisis: The Knights of Labor and a Midwest Community, 1885-1886," *Journal of American History* 66, No. 1 (June 1979), 41-61.

commandeered and sidetracked a St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad train transporting perishable freight at the railroad's Fort Smith crossing, while others removed set screws from trains at the Baring Cross round-house, effectively removing them from operation. In East St. Louis, strikes engaged in mass demonstrations at freight houses and railroad yards. Violence erupted on April 9 when between 1,000 and 1,500 strikers gathered on the east side of the city's bridge near the tracks of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to monitor strikebreaking activities and to jeer strikebreakers. Charging at the crowd, 15 armed deputy sheriffs, "losing entire control over themselves, fired promiscuously right and left," in the words of the Louisville Commercial. "The crowd broke and ran in all directions uttering maledictions as they retreated. Curses deep and loud, mingled with the groans of the wounded and dying." The pursuing deputies fired as many as 200 shots at the fleeing crowd, hitting at least three. "The holocaust of blood" continued with a "brief and bloody struggle on the narrow trestle bridge over the Kahokia" before the deputies fled. In contrast to their 1885 victory, the Knights went down to bitter defeat in 1886.²⁵⁹

The Pullman strike/boycott of 1894 was one of the largest, most dramatic, and significant labor conflicts of the late 19th century. The workers of the Pullman Palace Car Company—which constructed the luxurious Pullman sleeping cars—worked and lived in the "model" community of Pullman, Illinois (declared a National Historic Site in 1971), living under the stern paternalism of their anti-union employer George Pullman. In the midst of economic depression, wage cuts, and the firing of union activists, however, employees organized and turned to the American Railway Union (ARU) for assistance. The ARU had been formed the previous year, when some 50 railroad delegates inaugurated the organization as an industrial union, embracing workers in almost all railroad crafts, at a meeting in Chicago's Ulrich's Hall on June 20, 1893. Led by a former official of the conservative Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, Eugene V. Debs,²⁶⁰ the more inclusive and radical ARU had a membership of about 150,000 railroad workers by 1894. In response to Pullman workers' pleas for help, the ARU voted to boycott the company by refusing to work on any train that carried a Pullman car.²⁶¹ In the strike and boycott that followed, the ARU went against the industry's powerful General Managers' Association (representing some 24 rail lines), much of the nation's mainstream press, and state and federal

²⁵⁹ Ralph V. Turner and William Warren Rogers, "Arkansas Labor in Revolt: Little Rock and the Great Southwestern Strike," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* XXIV, no. 12 (Spring 1965), 29-46; "Bloodshed. The Result of the Labor Riots," *Louisville Commercial*, April 10, 1886.

²⁶⁰ Debs had been a leader in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen before his defection; his home, in Terre Haute, Indiana, near Indiana State University, today stands as a museum exploring Deb's life and vision.

²⁶¹ On the Pullman strike, see Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in 19th-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). Also see: William Carwardine, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1984); Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: The Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Upheaval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942); Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). Ray Ginger, *Eugene V. Debs: The Making of an American Radical* (New York: Macmillan/Collies, 1962). (The book originally appeared as *The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene Victor Debs* in 1947). Salvatore's study in particular situates Debs's evolving radicalism within the larger context of American working-class republican ideology. According to Salvatore, Debs viewed the "resuscitation of American political culture" as requiring a "defense of the independent citizen-producer" in the larger battle "to humanize industrial capitalist society." Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs*, 146. New work and interpretations of the Pullman strike also appeared on the event's 100th anniversary. Almost 200 scholars and trade unionists gathered at Indiana State University in Terre Haute (where Debs grew up and continued to live) in September 1994 to reexamine the strike and the larger crisis of the 1890s.

governments. Thousands of armed deputies and federal troops battled strikers, while the courts issued injunction after injunction, making it legally impossible for strike leaders to continue the strike. Debs and other leaders were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison for defiance of court orders. When it was over, Pullman palace car workers had lost their battle, the ARU was destroyed, and Eugene Debs was on the road to becoming a socialist.

Not all railroad labor activism centered on union recognition, wages, or working conditions. The racial composition of the labor force proved to be a motivating factor in the determination of white union strategy. Until the 1950s and 1960s, membership of the principal railroad brotherhoods was all white, as constitutional bars and membership rituals kept out African Americans and other non-whites. White trade unionists relied upon tactics including strikes, political lobbying, and in some cases, racial terrorism, to reduce the number of—or eliminate entirely—black railroaders in the operating service. For example, members of the all-white Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen struck the Georgia railroad (leased by the anti-union Louisville & Nashville railroad) in 1909 when the superintendent of the Atlanta Terminal yards removed 10 white workers, replacing them with 10 blacks at a lower cost. During the three-week long strike, whites denounced the very presence of blacks on board locomotive engines, and white strikers and sympathizers attacked black workers and white strikebreakers along the Georgia Railroad's route.

White firemen were unsuccessful in removing blacks in 1909, but they later renewed attacks on African-American workers in the operating trades with more success.²⁶² In 1911, white firemen on the Queen and Crescent railroad struck over the race issue in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio. At Kings Mountain, Kentucky—at the entrance of one of the railroad's longest tunnels—armed mountaineers stopped freight trains. A group of 25 whites attacked several black firemen, driving one from the train and shooting several others. In January 1919, white switchmen struck in the rail yards of Memphis, Tennessee, demanding the dismissal of their black counterparts.²⁶³ Following World War I, railroad companies and the federal government proved more responsive to white unionists' demands for limitations on black railroaders. Until the 1940s and 1950s, new black hires dropped in response to white union pressure.

Black trade unionism on the railroads took root in the service sector where blacks faced little competition from whites. Pullman porters, who captured popular attention over the years, put the issue of African-American trade unionism on the map of American labor and industrial relations in the 1920s and 1930s. Founded in 1925, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was led for over four decades by the charismatic black radical, A. Philip Randolph. The union contended not only with opposition from a staunchly anti-union corporation—which employed spies, a company union, and the blacklist to slow the Brotherhood's progress—but initially with opposition from black elites and the black press as well. The Pullman Company did offer jobs to black workers in an industry known for its pronounced racism, and it did offer advertising and

²⁶² John Michael Matthews, "The Georgia 'Race Strike' of 1909," *The Journal of Southern History* XL, No. 4 (November 1974), 613-630; Hugh B. Hammett, "Labor and Race: The Georgia Railroad Strike of 1909," *Labor History* 16 (Fall 1975), 470-484. Arnesen " 'Like Banquo's Ghost, It Will Not Down;' " Andrew Neather, "Popular Republicanism, Americanism, and the Roots of Anti-Communism, 1890-192" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1994); also see Paul Michel Taillon, "Culture, Politics, and the Making of the Railroad Brotherhoods, 1863-1916" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997).

²⁶³ "Mountain Men to Aid Strikers Halt 3 Trains," *Cleveland Press*, March 13, 1911; "Negro Fireman is Chased From Cab by Howling Mob," *Lexington Herald*, March 12, 1911.

other patronage to black editors and institutions. The battle for recognition, then, was an uphill one from the start. From 1925 to 1937, the BSCP suffered setback after setback.

The BSCP drew upon the energies and resources of its membership and those of the larger African-American community. By the 1930s, Randolph and his fellow organizers had secured the support of a wide range of allies, including the AFL, numerous black editors, and black ministers. Indeed, during the Great Depression and beyond, the Brotherhood held many of its organizing and business meetings in black churches. When it sponsored a national labor conference in 1930, attended by white AFL officials, delegates of the Brotherhood, and black political and social leaders, it chose the Metropolitan Community Church on Chicago's South Side to hold its public mass meeting. The Central Baptist Church of Pittsburgh was the location of its 1934 "monster mass meeting" to call for the adoption of amendments to the Railway Labor Act. In Kansas City, Missouri, the Paseo Baptist Church (located at 2501 Paseo) was the site of a BSCP convention in 1937, while the Bethel A.M.E. church of Detroit hosted the second annual Michigan Economic and Industrial Conference, which Randolph addressed. In Chicago, porters held numerous meetings at Du Sable High School, on State Street at 49th. In June 1936, some 2,000 porters, families and friends heard BSCP vice-president Milton P. Webster recount the history of the porters' fight to unionize and explain the union's policy of fighting "race prejudice in the A.F.L. from within," following AFL president William Green's presentation to the BSCP of its international charter.²⁶⁴ Two years later, the Brotherhood held its 12th anniversary celebration in the city's Church of the Good Shepherd located at 5700 Prairie Avenue.

The union finally won its long battle for recognition. Benefiting from its organizers' skill, rank-and-file commitment, and a changed political environment (in which New Deal legislation promised workers the right to elect a bargaining agent of their own choosing), the union was victorious in its 1935 representation election. Two years later, the Pullman Company signed its first contract with the black union. Salaries went up, hours went down, job security improved, and grievance procedures, to a degree, protected workers' rights. The NAACP's *Crisis* concluded, "As important as is this lucrative contract as a labor victory to the Pullman porters, it is even more important to the Negro race as a whole, from the point of view of the Negro's uphill climb for respect, recognition and influence, and economic advance."²⁶⁵ From its inception to the 1960s, the BSCP also functioned as a civil rights organization, taking action in both local communities and in national politics. Without question, the BSCP had emerged as the premier union of black workers in the nation and retains historical attention even today.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ "Pullman Porters' Union Invades City; Plans are Made for Unity," *Pittsburgh Courier*, September 22, 1934; "Local Meet is Addressed by Randolph," *Detroit Tribune*, August 14, 1937; "1st Race International Labor Unit is Chartered," *Chicago Defender*, June 13, 1936. In Chicago, the midwest headquarters for the union was located at 4231 South Michigan; in New York, the union's headquarters were located at 207 W. 140th Street in 1934; by the following year, it had moved to 105 West 136th Street; by 1940, it was located at 217 West 125th Street. On the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and numerous other black railroad unions, also see Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) and Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

²⁶⁵ G. James Fleming, "Pullman Porters Win Pot of Gold," *Crisis* 44, No.11 (November 1937), 333.

²⁶⁶ Although we have no full-scale modern treatment of the Porter's entire history, a number of important works address aspects of their struggle for recognition, dignity, and workplace and civil rights. Brailsford R. Brazeal's 1946 study of the union, *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: Its Origin and Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946) remains a valuable classic, while William H. Harris's 1977 book, *Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-37* (Urbana: University of Illinois

TEAMSTERS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Before the rise of motorized trucking, drays drawn by horse or mule facilitated the movement of goods within urban areas. In the 18th and 19th centuries, New York cartmen—independent tradesmen who purchased licenses from the city and owned their own animals and carts—carried goods through the nation's largest city's unpaved dirt streets.²⁶⁷ The motorized trucking industry developed during and after World War I, as mechanical advances, lower production costs for trucks, and the expansion of a nationwide system of usable roads made truck traffic economically feasible. The industry's widespread unionization during and after the 1930s has its roots before the advent of motorized trucks. In the 19th century, small unions of team drivers came together to form the Team Drivers International Union, which received its charter from the AFL in 1899. The union, which later changed its name to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), enrolled primarily delivery drivers (of such goods as ice, milk, laundry, and bread) in urban areas.²⁶⁸ By the 1930s, the union's leaders, especially its president, Dan Tobin, were conservative. Opposing industrial unionism and the character of those who worked in it at the 1935 AFL convention in Atlantic City, Tobin described mass production workers as "the rubbish at labor's door." The previous year, he had opposed West Coast radicals, and Harry Bridges in particular, in the San Francisco General Strike.

The year 1934, however, witnessed a tremendous upheaval in the ranks of organized teamsters in the city of Minneapolis, a bastion of the open shop. Inspired by Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act, truck drivers joined the upsurge of unionization that was sweeping the nation. Round one of the labor conflict was a successful three-day strike that closed the city's 67 coal yards, ending with employers' recognition of Teamsters General Drivers Local 574. Under the leadership of Trotskyist (Socialist Workers' Party) unionists, the Dunne Brothers and Karl Skogeland, the local next spearheaded a general strike in May that, in the words of the city's

Press, 1977) solidly explores the BSCP's early years. An excellent article on obstacles to the porters' organizing efforts is Greg Leroy, "The Founding Heart of A. Philip Randolph's Union: Milton P. Webster and Chicago's Pullman Porters Organize, 1925-1937," *Labor's Heritage* 3, No. 3 (July 1991). Jervis Anderson's *A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972) not surprisingly focuses more on the BSCP's leader than it does on the BSCP itself, but it is an excellent biography that places Randolph in a detailed context of politics and protest. Paula F. Pfeffer's *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) is an important study of Randolph's and the BSCP's involvement in political and social movements of the 1940s and beyond. Jack Santino's *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989) is based upon a series of excellent oral histories with retired porters and focuses on the social and cultural world of the men in the Pullman company's employ. Melinda Chateauvert's *Marching Together: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998) breaks new ground in its reconstitution of the ideology and activities of the BSCP's Women's Economic Councils and the Women's Auxiliaries. Brotherhood men began crafting the union's story "right after its founding," she argues. But the story they craft, designed as an "educational tool, a catechism for union membership," was a heavily male one. Not only does Chateauvert restore black women's activism to the story of African-American labor organizing, but she calls overdue attention to the "prevailing gender ideologies" Brotherhood men used "to construct an organizational role for women in the labor movement." Other groups of railroad service workers have not had the attention that Pullman porters have. To date, red caps and dining car workers have no book or article length studies. Arnesen's *Brotherhoods of Color* deals with the broad spectrum of black unionization beyond the porters' ranks.

²⁶⁷ Howard B. Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic: The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: New York University Press, 1979); Graham Russell Hodges, *New York City Cartmen, 1667-1850* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

²⁶⁸ James H. Thomas, *The Long Haul: Truckers, Truck Stops & Trucking* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 12-73.

sheriff, "had the town tied up tight. Not a truck could move in Minneapolis." (The strikers, however, allowed the transportation of essential goods like milk, ice and coal, provided that union truckers delivered the goods). The strikers and their wives ran a kitchen and an infirmary (or field hospital, as an organizer called it) and published their own newspaper out of their operational headquarters in a large garage at 1900 Chicago Avenue. In the end, some 35,000 building trades workers joined the walkout. The climax of this round occurred on May 21. A violent police attack on pickets met with an organized response by hundreds of armed strikers, in a clash that left dozens injured. The following day, between 20,000-30,000 people renewed the battle in the city's central marketplace in what became known as the "Battle of Deputies Run." A renewal of the strike produced more casualties on July 20 before the governor declared martial law. On August 1, the state National Guard took over the strike headquarters and arrested its leaders. Days later, the Governor ordered the raid of the Citizen's Alliance. In the end, the four-month long conflict ended with a victory for the strikers.²⁶⁹ The radical local 574 grew in size and influence until World War II, when the federal government arrested the union's Trotskyist leadership for opposition to the war.

Since the mid-1930s, national Teamster leaders Tobin, Dave Beck, and James Hoffa had studied the Minneapolis union's strategy, copied organizing techniques, and expanded the size of the IBT (the International grew to over half a million by 1941, up from 80,000 in 1932 and 135,000 in 1937). Especially under Hoffa's leadership, the union secured contracts providing for high wages and good benefits. Centralized, pattern bargaining provided for uniform conditions for Teamster members. Revelations by racketeering investigations of the union's internal corruption and ties to organized crime led to the IBT's expulsion from the AFL in 1957. Although it had grown to become the nation's largest trade union by the 1960s, continued corruption and the deregulation of the trucking industry by the Reagan Administration—which promoted the growth of nonunion truck operators—took a toll on the union by the 1980s. A federal take-over of the IBT and the rise of reform leaders, backed by the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, breathed new life into the almost century-old organization in the 1990s.²⁷⁰

Conclusion

From the age of sail to the age of steam, from the era of canals to the era of highways, from overland, animal-drawn transport to that of railroads, trucks, and airplanes—the transportation sector has supported a heterogeneous work force in terms of skill, race, and ethnicity. Irish canal builders, Chinese and Irish rail track laborers, and African-American sailors and Pullman porters all demonstrated a desire for individual and group advancement. By the mid-20th century, successful unionization had occurred in most areas of transportation. While by no means eliminating poor conditions, low wages, or racial discrimination, unionization improved workers' standards of living, and shifted control away from management toward labor.

²⁶⁹ Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972), 161-66; Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion* (New York: Monad Press, 1972); Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Power* (New York: Monad Press, 1973); Thomas R. Brooks, *Toil and Trouble: A History of American Labor* (Second edition, New York: Delta Publishing Co., 1971), 165-67.

²⁷⁰ Estelle James, "Jimmy Hoffa: Labor Hero or Labor's Own Foe?" in Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *Labor Leaders in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 303-323; Dan La Botz, *Rank and File Rebellion* (New York: Verso, 1990).

Since the Second World War, however, transportation has undergone technological and organizational changes that have had implications for the character and quality of work and union influence. The railroad (particularly passenger service) and shipping industries have undergone serious decline and the "containerization" revolution on the waterfronts has reduced the number of unskilled dock workers. From the 1970s-1990s, government deregulation of the trucking industry and the rise of strong, anti-union employers has weakened, and in some cases eliminated, unions, producing substantial wage cuts and the worsening of on-the-job conditions. The history of the transportation industry demonstrates that economic development came with a high price in human life and suffering. But workers' collective efforts altered the balance of power, reshaped social relations at the workplace, and spurred significant improvements.

WORK SITES OF PUBLIC AND WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS



Clerks at work at post office. (ca. 1920-ca. 1950)

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Theodor Horydczak Collection, 1923-1959.

[LC-H824-TO1-1842 DLC]

WORK SITES OF PUBLIC AND WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS²⁷¹

Public and white-collar working sites are often invisible in labor history. Insurance workers who launched picket lines in the early 1970s typically did so in isolated and obscure suburban industrial parks. Hundreds of thousands who the 1981 lockout of the air traffic controllers did so in public space on the Mall in Washington, DC, rather than at an air traffic tower. The most significant historical site for the 1968 sanitation workers' struggle in Memphis might be the church where Martin Luther King addressed members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) on the evening of his assassination. His now famous jeremiad urged them to continue the struggle.²⁷² To better appreciate the significance of these sites, it is essential to understand important structural changes in business and the economy.²⁷³

During this time, public workers included professionals, semi-professionals, manual laborers, and clerical and office workers; white-collar workers included those from the lowest paid office gopher up to managerial staff. Segmentation of workers into categories of class and status permeated white-collar occupations. Despite locations in central business districts of most cities, these new offices often excluded African Americans and foreign-born workers.²⁷⁴

Eric Olin Wright has said that the lack of autonomy on the job for most white-collar workers places them in the working class, but does argue that the criterion of autonomy becomes more problematic as one moves up from the lowest rung of white-collar workers.²⁷⁵ Sharon Hartman Strom points out that labor historians dismissed white-collar work as non-working class, while ignoring working-class men joining the ranks, the relatively high wages offered women, and efforts that women have launched since World War II. The greatest success in unionization for white-collar work has come in the form of public employee unionism, for example, where women schoolteachers rejected notions of semi-professionalism and opted for a strategy of solidarity. Nurses followed the same pattern, but resistance to unionization in the public sector by business elites made it impossible for women and African-American workers to gain recognition until the civil rights movement. Labor analysts contend that while most of the net union growth since the 1960s has been white collar, organization occurred primarily in the public sector, leaving a vast group of unorganized white- and blue-collar workers.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ Marjorie Murphy, Professor of History at Swarthmore College prepared this essay. Dr. Murphy is an expert on teachers unions and the author of *Blackboard Unions, The AFT and the NEA, 1900-1980* (Cornell University Press, 1990), which traces the history of the unionization of public school teachers. More generally, Dr. Murphy is knowledgeable on American labor history, public sector unionism, and women's history.

²⁷² Martin Luther King, Jr., 3 April 1968, at the Bishop Charles Mason Temple in Memphis, TN. James M. Washington, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1986), 286.

²⁷³ For more on the PATCO strike see, Arthur B. Shostack and David Skocik, *The Air Controllers' Controversy: Lessons from the PATCO Strike* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1986). For a thorough discussion of the managerial revolution see Alfred Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

²⁷⁴ David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1-15; Ileen A. DeVault, *Sons and Daughters of Labor: Class and Clerical Work in Turn-of-the-Century Pittsburgh* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 9-23.

²⁷⁵ Eric Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State* (London: Verso, 1979), 26-28; Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 189-212; Gordon, *Segmented Work*, 1-15.

²⁷⁶ Sharon Hartman Strom, "Challenging 'Woman's Place' Feminism, the Left and Industrial Unionism in the

Managerial Revolution

Alfred Chandler first observed the rise of the modern multi-unit enterprise—administrative coordination permitting lower costs and higher profits. A managerial hierarchy emerged, and, as "men came and went," the institution and its offices remained.²⁷⁷ Mass production and distribution combined with the vertical integration of firms resulted in a "giant industrial enterprise which remains today the most powerful privately owned and managed economic institution in modern market economies."²⁷⁸ The administration of these complex institutions required middle managers and an army of clerical workers. The largest and most influential firms in tobacco, food, and light machinery groups pioneered the integrated firm in the period from the 1880s to World War I. Upper echelons of management "perfected the new form of overall organizational structure" and focused on "evaluating, planning and allocating resources for the enterprise as a whole." Meanwhile, middle managers specialized in production and distribution.²⁷⁹ "Thus," Harry Braverman writes, "marketing became the second major subdivision of the corporation, subdivided in its turn among sales, advertising, promotion, correspondence, orders, commissions, sales analysis, and other such sections."²⁸⁰ Office work became a labor process itself.

Frederick Winslow Taylor became gang boss over lathes at Midvale Steel in Philadelphia and argued that until he arrived the workers ran the shops, not the bosses, and he single-handedly challenged the domination of skilled craftsmen over the labor process. "In the whole production matrix, people are probably the most frustrating for managers since they constitute the most difficult variable to control and predict."²⁸¹ Centralized planning, systematic analysis of shop floor operations, ordering and detailing of supervisory instructions and calculating wage payments to induce conformity with the new management became known as the system of Taylorism. Time and motion study experts set up cameras, machine tools were categorized, standardized and accounted for by clerks; detailed records became necessary. This process of scientific management transformed craftsmen and foremen into supervisory personnel—who needed clerical help to make the factory run smoothly. A specialist in routing, speeding, and stopwatch observation required elaborate record keeping, reports from inspectors, and calculations of piece scale incentives. White-collar jobs increased.

The struggle to control workers in production was "a chronic battle in industrial life which assumed a variety of forms," David Montgomery writes.²⁸² In the late 19th century, department store managers participated in the struggle mightily, and, as Susan Porter Benson notes, they

1930's," *Feminist Studies*, 9 (Summer, 1983), 359-86; Ava Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future," in Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered, Toward a New History of American Labor*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-46; Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (New York: Verso, 1988), 210.

²⁷⁷ Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 8.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 376.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 454.

²⁸⁰ Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 92-103, 304.

²⁸¹ "Frederick Winslow Taylor on the Principles of Scientific Management," in Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers: Documents and Essays* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1991), 319-323.

²⁸² David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 10.

were "in the vanguard of the still-continuing effort to forge labor-management policies appropriate to the new situation."²⁸³ The special conditions of large-scale retailing meant that these managers had to buck the tide of deskilling, because the skill of workers mattered in high productivity. Despite advertising, the department store managers could not move goods unless sales women cooperated by knowing the merchandise and relating accurate information to customers. Monitoring output was equally difficult, as seasonal fluctuations and the public nature of selling limited the manager's ability to enforce systematic measurements of productivity. Because the stores were staffed with female sales personnel working under male managers but selling to middle-class female customers, a contradiction between managers' expectations and limited opportunities for sales women emerged. Eventually store managers introduced more incentives for low-paid female clerks—but only the coalition of middle-class women and department sales women brought reform in the long hours and arbitrary rules. Store managers were attracted to employee welfare programs—such as social service programs—and training for the sales force to encourage compliant and efficient behavior. But introduction of these programs was a double-edged sword.

Personnel departments, sociological departments, and welfare programs represented an organizational response to ease the burdens of the new management, reduce high departure rates, and fend off growing unionism. Personnel departments established between 1911-1923 were under constant critical scrutiny, often by proponents of scientific management themselves, so were aggressive at standardizing and record keeping. These departments focused on management's growing clerical force, where resistance²⁸⁴ to new methods proved most feeble and success was most visible to upper-level management.

In 1907, William Henry Leffingwell began using the Taylor system at the Curtis Publishing Company in Philadelphia and published his results in what became the first in a series of office manuals, this one entitled, "Scientific Management in the Office." Opening mail at this large mail order operation was reorganized so the handling clerk could open 500 pieces of mail in one hour, instead of only 100. Leffingwell even measured how far away a drinking fountain could be placed so that thirsty workers would not lose aggregate numbers of hours walking a calculated 50,000 miles a year for a drink. One efficiency expert wrote, "Some typewriter concerns equip their machines with a mechanical contrivance which automatically counts the strokes on the typewriter and records them on a dial," but the strokes were not all accurate. Undaunted, the managers assessed "relative efficiency of each clerk," thus underlining, in Harry Braverman's words, "the mystique" of science. One manager made a "time study of the evaporation of inks and found that non-evaporating ink wells could save a dollar a year on each inkwell," and Braverman wryly added, ". . . that the rate of evaporation of course varies with the humidity, and the results would not be constant."²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 344.

²⁸⁴ David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 214-256. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 87.

²⁸⁵ Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 311.

Attempts to standardize office work continued. Braverman observes

In the beginning, the office was the site of mental labor and the shop the site of manual labor. This was even true, as we have seen, after Taylor, and in part because of Taylor; scientific management gave the office a monopoly over conception, planning, judgment, and the appraisal of results, while in the shop nothing was to take place other than the physical execution of all that was thought up in the office. Insofar as this was true the identification of office work with thinking and educated labor, and of the production process proper with unthinking and uneducated labor, retained some validity. But once the office was itself subjected to the rationalization process this contrast lost its force. The functions of thought and planning became concentrated in an ever smaller group within the office, and for the mass of those employed there the office became just as much a site of manual labor as the factory floor.²⁸⁶

Photographs of early office workers document the desire for an orderly, hierarchical plan of work. Women sat at workstations set evenly apart, each with a typewriter and some with access to phones, while male supervisors stood over them. There is some resemblance to the gender distribution in early textile mills, however, here everyone is preoccupied, in an orderly manner, in a literal paper storm of scientific management. Unit time values have been calculated for every paper snip, for collating, gathering, punching, removing materials, opening and sorting mail, and delivering of papers. The command of line staff planning is evident: a grid of responsibilities has been drawn and assignments made by unseen managers. Work has been divided, distributed, and defined in an office out of camera range. The connection with upper level management severed, the office has become another shop floor.

After the Civil War, most American firms hired fewer than 50 workers, and a typical office force was less than half a dozen workers. These numbers would change between 1870-1920, as the number of clerical workers increased from 881,619 or .6 percent of the work force in 1870 to 3,111,836 or 7.3 percent of the work force in 1920. Women, less than 3 percent of clerical workers in 1870, were 45 percent of the work force by 1920. Mechanization—the introduction of the typewriter, telephone, and telegraph—and feminization to the point of women becoming close to 92 percent of the clerical force in major firms, created conditions ripe for bureaucratization.²⁸⁷ According to Sharon Hartman Strom, "The 1920s saw an acceleration of the trends earlier begun: declining proportions engaged in basic production (agriculture, manufacturing, and mining) and increasing proportions engaged in the distribution and service industries (professions, clerking, sales nursing, laundry, and waitressing)."²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Alba M. Edwards, *Comparative Occupation Statistics for the U.S., 1870-1940*, U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census (Washington, 1943), 101; Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 106-107.

²⁸⁸ Sharon Hartman Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class, and the Origins of Modern American Office Work, 1900-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), Part 1.

Mechanization

The typewriter, invented in the 1870s, changed the personnel in office work—typists and stenographers replaced copyists. Christopher Lathan Sholes, a Milwaukee printer, publisher, and civil servant filed the 52nd patent on the typewriter, but he was the most successful in marketing this new invention. His partner, James Densmore, brought an improved machine to E. Remington and Sons, a rifle manufacturing company in Ilion, New York. Remington executives were "crazy over the invention," given the collapse of the demand for military ware in 1873. The company quickly hired "type" girls, who would demonstrate the \$125 machines. Stenographers took most of jobs previously done by copyists, and they often typed their copy; typists only worked with the machine, indicating a new hierarchy on the office shop floor.²⁸⁹

Alexander Bell's invention of the telephone in 1880 brought quick, convenient communication to offices, which created the demand for even more clerical workers. At the central telephone exchanges, men operated switches and supervised the laying of cable. At the offices, women were placed at the switchboards. Office work became more specialized and more hierarchical, and, by the end of the century, most telephone operators were women.²⁹⁰

Feminization

Women entering clerical occupations at the close of the 19th century received high wages compared with other occupations open to women. Given a choice of domestic labor or factory work, the white-collar occupations, despite long hours, offered a better life. At one point, in specific areas of the country, schoolteachers made less than clerical workers, stenographers, or private secretaries. The Remington Company promoted the "type" girl with the machine as a sales pitch, but also opened private classes for women to learn how to use the typewriter. Years later, Hollywood romanticized office typists and connected clerical workers with the emerging suffragist movement. But such portrayals didn't address the alienation of office work. "The reality of office work for lower middle-class clerks lacked dramatic contrast and was overlooked" in the film industry, writes Gregory Bush. So the appearance of equality was linked with the image of the woman office worker, but proved deceptive.²⁹¹

Nowhere else was appearance more important than in the department stores, where men and women found many white-collar jobs in sales. ". . . [T]he customer entered through a grand marble arcade lighted by stained-glass skylights and chandeliers. The rotunda was a frequent feature of department stores; the upper floors formed galleries around a central court topped at roof level with leaded or plain glass. Fine woods, gleaming marble, and luxurious carpets were staples of department-store decoration." Department store sales clerks were in "the Cinderella of occupations," outranking women working in factories, as waitresses, or in domestic service.

²⁸⁹ Margery W. Davies, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 34-37.

²⁹⁰ Elizabeth Beardsley Butler, *Women and the Trades in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984); Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 167-169; Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 227.

²⁹¹ Gregory Bush, "'I'd Prefer Not To:' Resistance of Office Work in Some American Films," *Labor History* (Summer 1990), 361-372; Margery Davies, *Woman's Place*, 62.

Other jobs, even clerical work, could not always compete with department store selling, where "the excitement and gentility of department store selling often outweighed the possibilities of higher earnings in factories." Mechanization and division of labor made clerical jobs less attractive, while sociability, "opportunities for self-culture and education," upward mobility, and glamour made the "selling floor" appealing. Unlike office work, which often proved dull, the department store was part of the culture of consumption.²⁹²

The purveyors of this culture were advertisers, whose offices were filled with copywriters, ad agents, photographers, and artists. N. W. Ayers and Son maintained headquarters in Philadelphia, while Lord and Thomas kept headquarters in Chicago. But by 1923 Madison Avenue represented the location of the largest national advertisers, and Wall Street was responsible for the concentration. "By the late 1920s, 247 Park Avenue, 285 Madison Avenue, and the Graybar building on Lexington Avenue near 42nd Street had become the three points of a triangle of bustling advertising activity," Roland Marchand explained. When radio advertising appeared in the late 1920s, the print media was filled with advertisements—a single issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* often exceeded 200 pages. This magazine was the "Nation's advertising showcase and the largest weekly in circulation." The Curtis Building in Philadelphia, the same location for early experiments in office scientific management, was also where the *Post* was produced.²⁹³

The Ayer Advertising Agency followed the pattern of corporate development and labor division. In 1869, F. W. Ayer founded the agency as a one-man shop. By 1876, 13 employees worked in three divisions: the business department solicited the ads, the forwarding department sent the ads to newspapers, and the registry department handled bookkeeping. Four years later the agency reorganized, this time with 43 employees and eight departments. Another reorganization came in 1900, with new departments and 163 employees. So many new employees and departments had been introduced by 1916 that the agency created a production department to coordinate the work of specialists, relieve the creative workers of "petty details and routine work," and hire "comparatively unskilled employees" to produce "better copy at lower costs." These constant reorganizations created a four-tiered office with middle management, a lower management of supervisors, upper-level clerical workers who organized assignments and kept books, and the least skilled—often women—performing narrow tasks.²⁹⁴

Advertisers typically accepted contracts with new firms on a trial basis, which meant Ayers had to compete to get a permanent account. For example, in 1899 when Ayers had National Biscuit Company as a client, management decided that, because of added business, office hours must be extended to 51 hours a week. Work rules and the division of labor were designed from the experience of manufacturing firms, whose adoption of staff-line management seemed irrefragable.²⁹⁵ And as creativity became separated from production, the images of office life

²⁹² Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 19, 181, 2117.

²⁹³ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), 6-7; Bryan Burroughs and John Heylar, *Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco* (New York: Harper, 1991), 29-32.

²⁹⁴ Davies, *Woman's Place*, 38-48.

²⁹⁵ Line organizations are where the authority runs in a line from the president to the division's general manager, and then by line to his assistants, and then to the heads of the functional units within the division, department, or unit. The departments in the central office would have an advisory relationship only to the new divisions, but every

continued to be idealized. Advertisers produced images of white-collar work that few offices could replicate.²⁹⁶

Public Workers and Public Efficiency

While clerical work continued to attract women in the early 20th century, teaching appealed to thousands of women looking for a long-term occupation with upward mobility. The business world was a man's world, but education had been left to women and children. Teaching was the fifth most important occupation for women in 1900, although increasingly difficult to enter. School critics demanded greater teacher qualifications. Once, only limited secondary normal school training had been required, but by 1900 school boards wanted at least a high school diploma and evidence of post-secondary training. Teachers without these qualifications were frightened into returning to school for credentialing, while new recruits were tested and watched for signs of professional behavior. A new generation of college educated women gained positions in high schools, setting a standard for elementary school teachers. Ninety-eight percent of teachers in urban areas were in the school system longer than men, but rarely promoted to supervisory levels. The cities' large immigrant populations meant that schools could afford only cheap educational labor. Teachers were veritable armies of white-collar workers numbering between 5-10,000 in large city school systems like Chicago, New York, and Detroit.²⁹⁷

No aspect of American enterprise was immune to scientific management, least of all the public education system. Teachers, often suffragists who took a civic interest in urban politics, connected the politics of city hall with the politics of education. These women opposed the standards of scientific management in the schools and argued that schools were not laboratories for experimentation in business management styles. Despite resistance, centralization did enter into the management of public schools, although not all time motion studies and staff-line management proved successful. The drive to lower educational costs was countered by the teachers' awareness of their numbers, organizational strength, and the symbolic function of public education in ideology. (Common schools were part of what John Dewey called democracy in education, meaning that ordinary citizens had the right to a quality education.) The argument was powerful, but did little to raise salaries for teachers. Teachers proved weak at the bargaining table, largely because they were a large group of unenfranchised public workers. Cutting any wage increase for them would substantially balance a city budget.²⁹⁸

Other public workers, like police and firemen, were not immune to the blandishments of public efficiency proponents, although men could vote, which was a powerful weapon in public sector negotiations. Professional fire departments replaced volunteer fire departments by the end of the 19th century. Although these departments traditionally represented ethnic groups or

division would have its own staff, independent of the central office staff. It is a system of management for the multi-divisional structure widely used in American Industry that was pioneered in the DuPont chemical industry and adopted by General Motors and others. It freed top management from daily operations to make long-term strategic decisions. The only departments that might maintain line authority were the accounting departments. For more on line organizations see Alfred D. Chandler, *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Industrial Enterprise* (Boston, MIT Press, 1962).

²⁹⁶ Davies, *Woman's Place*, 45.

²⁹⁷ See Marjorie Murphy, *Blackboard Unions: the AFT and the NEA, 1900-1980* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990).

²⁹⁸ Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, chapter 3.

neighborhoods, civil service reform in the cities changed these demographics; however, these groups still negotiated with the cities through ward representatives. Contact with city hall was haphazard, usually achieved through alliance with the powerful Patrolmen Benevolent Associations.²⁹⁹

Uniformed Police: Blue-Coated Workers

The creation of a uniformed police department took place in a number of cities in the 19th century: Boston, 1838-59; New York, 1843-53; Cincinnati, 1848-59; and Denver, 1874.³⁰⁰ The notion of a uniformed police force was not popular in some cities. In 1855, the debate over a uniformed police force offended progressives and radicals in Chicago, who argued that there was no place in a republic for a standing army of policemen. The introduction of a uniformed professional police force would not be a crime deterrent because Americans did not respect uniforms. Finally, the centralization of the police force would take control of the police from the neighborhoods and put it in the hands of corrupt politicians or special corporate interests.

In Chicago, the fire of 1871 provided the final impetus for a uniformed, centralized police force. After the fire, Chicago's middle class on the west side of the Chicago River was horrified to find an army of urban refugees fleeing to their neighborhood: "All day long, too the homeless trooped through our West Side streets, beggin at our doors for food and shelter—some grimly bearing their lot, others in tears, or frenzied with excitement. Over the few bridges that were still unburned they came, driving wagons filled with household goods, or trudging hand-in-hand with crying children, their backs bent to the weight of treasured objects, a baby's crib, maybe of a family portrait."³⁰¹ Since widespread looting and a crime spree followed the fire, some of these belongings did not belong to the refugees. The lack of police protection mobilized the city's middle class as a municipal league pushed for a uniformed police department under the city council and the mayor. After the depression of 1873-1878, a new mayor found the money for a police force. But, by the economic downturn of 1885, the city was for the first time faced with the prospect of disorder as the unemployed tramped into the city looking for work at the same time a rebellion of the newly created police department brewed.

The time for testing the class reliability of the police force came with the famous Haymarket Affair of 1886, when anarchists threw a bomb into the ranks of mounted police officers during the eight-hour day strike at McCormick Reapers. The policemen had just been promised a pay raise as the eight-hour day organizing drive of the Knights of Labor began. The Knights had been successful in attracting policemen to their ranks, but the raise, with standardized uniforms promised, suddenly assured the complete loyalty of the police department to business owners in the city, thus tipping the balance against these workers and agitators. The bomb provided a symbolic divide between the police and the workers. Applications for police unions into the American Federation of Labor (AFL) would not even be entertained until after 1915. The use of

²⁹⁹ Bruce Laurie, "Fire Companies and Gangs in Southwark: The 1840s," in Allen F. Davis and Mark Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790-1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 71-87.

³⁰⁰ Eric H. Monkkenon, *Police in Urban America, 1860-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45-50.

³⁰¹ Richard Sennett, *Families Against the City: Middle Class Homes of Industrial Chicago, 1872-1890* (New York: Vintage, 1970), 32.

private police forces like the Pinkertons in the northeastern coalfields and in steel towns tended to raise police pay that further isolated them from the labor movement. Still, had the police been so accountable it is doubtful that Attorney General Robert Olney would have felt the need to send in federal troops to Chicago in the railway strike of 1894. As long as the city could collect taxes and pass income into the pockets of policemen, they were a stable force for law and order under the direction of the Mayor and City Council. When the city coffers were low and corruption rampant, the blue army could succumb to corrupt interests in the city.³⁰²

Civil Service Reform and Government Workers

Clerical work at the federal level continued to expand. In the Civil War, the employment of women in federal offices offered unheard of opportunities. Most of these women were well-educated widows, but some were single career women, who, for the first time, could command an independent salary. Feminization of federal offices promoted governmental reforms as Cindy Aron shows in her study of federal clerical workers. Because civil service reform began before scientific management became popular in private industry, certain protections for government workers privileged them above other white-collar workers as the 20th century began.

Civil service reform grew as a movement after the Civil War in the wake of several scandals at the local, state, and federal government levels. Many civil servants favored reform because the arbitrariness of political appointment had often deprived them of their livelihood and subjected them to incompetent leadership. The inability of the Republican Party to effect reform nearly lost them the election of 1876 and opened the way for serious discussion of operating a truly reformed system of separating appointed political office from jobs earned by merit through an impartial examination. The creation of the Civil Service Commission and the subsequent reclassification of job categories in the Postal Service and all other federal agencies led to minor reforms. Many state governments had instituted reforms before the federal response, yet, by the turn of the century, civil service was still an issue in most states because critics felt these initial attempts neither went far enough nor covered all branches of government.³⁰³

Professionalism as an Ideology

Teachers, policemen, firemen, nurses, stenographers, bookkeepers, and accountants formed professional organizations in the 19th century to model their positions after more prestigious occupations in law, medicine, and higher education. Often the promotion of these professions introduced higher entrance requirements, formal training and education, and the pursuit of economic rewards based upon professional attributes. The professionalization project worked to create tiers within career groups; accountants gained, while bookkeepers were kept at a lower tier; educational supervisors acquired status, while public school teachers' salaries stabilized; doctors controlled hospitals, while nurses had closed career paths. Despite the fragmentation, loss of autonomy, and deskilling that occurred in these semi-professions, the ideology of professional language promised prestige and gentility. The ideology served as a barrier against unionization. Professionalism in its earliest years served to reinforce gender divisions and kept

³⁰² Paul Aurich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984).

³⁰³ Cindy Aron, "To Barter Their Souls for Gold: Female Clerks in Federal Government Offices, 1862-1890," *Journal of American History* 67 (1981), 835-853.

ethnic groups from promotions. For nurses, hospital schools of nursing encoded a "professional demeanor," which Barbara Melosh explains, "helped nurses to defend their emotions against the shocks of hospital life." Lucy Walker, Superintendent of Nurses at the Pennsylvania Hospital, introduced a program that eliminated untrained competitors, raised standards, and established authority and partial autonomy. By 1920, the private duty nurse whose chores were just a cut above that of domestic service was replaced by a more professionalized nurse whose outlook and demeanor recognized the hierarchy of the medical profession.³⁰⁴

The professionalization of semi-professions further segmented the labor markets of white-collar employment. For example, as women transformed vocations in nursing, social work, public health, and teaching into concepts of craft and professionalism, the labor market closed opportunities for them in corporate offices and in the new areas of white-collar employment.

The first turning point emerged as workers resisted the heavy-handed approach of Taylorism through various alternative strategies, including trade union activity, which was not very successful. Another strategy was work culture—the ideology and practice with which workers stake out autonomous spheres of action on the job. Sue Benson explains that work culture and the relative power of women clerical workers produced an accommodation to managerial policy. This argument is useful in cases where white-collar workers were able to manipulate the situation through the presence of a client, either the hospital patient, bank account holder, student, shop floor customer, or telephone caller. In cases of extreme isolation such as in mail order firms, insurance companies, or accounting firms, white-collar workers' shop floor resistance by manipulating rules proved more difficult. While some resistance was possible, white-collar operatives resembled factory operatives—women, especially, would just quit—and the highest turnover rates plagued these industries.³⁰⁵

Resistance to Centralization and Bureaucracy

The slow progress of unionization of public workers in the 20th century demonstrates how difficult resistance to the managerial ethos has been for American workers. As one commentator has argued, AFL President Samuel Gompers, who held office from 1886 to 1924, drew a line between what he called "brain" workers and manual labor, concluding that the two were incompatible, and the former were unreliable allies for the labor movement. Despite his dismissal, public workers, especially teachers, formed unions at the turn of the century. The Chicago Teachers' Federation (CTF) was perhaps the strongest of these unions, with well over 5,000 members and a majority of the cities' schoolteachers organized. Margaret Haley, one of the CTF leaders, challenged centralization in public education, urged teachers to defy the school system's new managerial style, defeated legislation to make schools conform efficiency, and argued that schools should not serve the Carnegies or Rockefellers, but instead the working people whose children came to learn. These teachers became the backbone of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), which organized in 1903 and brought together an organization of middle-class women as well as women in the new industrially organized garment trades and

³⁰⁴ Marjorie Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 2, 24-25; Barbara Melosh, *The Physician's Hand: Work Culture and Conflict in American Nursing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press) 1982; David Noble, *America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (New York: Oxford, 1977).

³⁰⁵ Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 228-229.

other manufacturing areas. The WTUL aided poor working women on strike, developed leadership of working women, and pushed the AFL leadership to hire women organizers. Teachers, clerical workers, and other higher paid women contributed to the subscription list of the WTUL's popular publication, *Life and Labor*.³⁰⁶

Other similar teacher unions became important during the Progressive Era, and, as leaders in the community, teachers made union ties acceptable to other white-collar workers. In 1912, the federal government repealed its gag rule that denied federal employees the right to organize and petition Congress for wages. That same year the Federation of Federal Civil Service Employees in San Francisco affiliated with the AFL. Meanwhile, the National Federation of Letter Carriers rejected affiliation with the AFL in 1914, but a new industrial union, the National Federation of Postal Employees, formed in 1917 and voted 23,551 to 1,971 in favor of affiliation. In Washington, DC, federal government workers formalized labor organizations, but squabbles with the AFL over union jurisdiction and a disastrous reclassification of job categories by the Bureau of Public Efficiency discredited their various organizations. Inflation set off by World War I hit public workers hard by the closing of the war in 1917-1918. The pressure to buy war bonds without political protection from ultra patriotic groups further exacerbated government employee organizations, which might otherwise have remained quiescent.³⁰⁷

Direct attacks on public employee unions began as early as 1913. In that year the Peoria, Illinois, school board introduced a yellow dog contract, which stated that teachers wishing to work in that city had to agree not to join a union. That same year the new Postmaster General, Albert Burleson, tried to repeal the legislation that rescinded the gag rule and pursued an anti-labor campaign arguing that employees' efforts for higher pay during the war were "selfish demands" and refused to deal with union representatives. In 1915, a yellow dog rule introduced into the Chicago school system threatened 6,200 teachers with immediate dismissal. Despite his qualms about the teachers' union, his uncomfortable alliance with their allies in the WTUL, and his hostility toward the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Samuel Gompers was outraged and came to the city to join a mass demonstration. The yellow dog rules daunted no one; teachers announced their determination to fight the counter-revolution of the managerial ethos. They had allies in the postal workers, other government workers, and a new sector of public service—in 1915, the AFL offices were flooded with a wave of policemen and firemen ready to join the ranks of labor.

Telephone Strikes and World War I

The wave of unionization continued into the war. The most dramatic impact the unionization of public employees had was in white-collar work, specifically in the telephone strikes of the period from 1915-1919. According to Elizabeth Faue, the phone strikes created a sense of community cooperation unprecedented in previous labor actions. In Minneapolis the "hello girls" brought together the coalition of community support that gave the strike "a spirit of carnival." The strike began in November 1918. Just four days after the armistice, "1200 strikers marched through the

³⁰⁶ Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 70-73; Nancy Schron Dye, *As Equals and As Sisters: Feminism, Unionism and the Women's Trade Union League* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 82-85.

³⁰⁷ Sterling Spero, *Government as Employer* (New York: Remson Press, 1948), 182-83, 134, 136, 146.

streets of the twin cities, using horns, rattlers, automobile sounders, and everything else that would make a noise."³⁰⁸

Telephone service was union free in its first two decades. The Bell System organized in 1878, and the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers obtained a charter in 1891 and signed its first contract in 1898, primarily for linemen and cable splicers. Feminization characterized the industry in its growth years. From 1900-1910, the number of female operators rose 475 percent.³⁰⁹ In 1907, the Bell Company employed 96,000 of the 132,000 phone workers, and labor relations had grown hostile with a series of strikes in the craft unions. Operators, who by 1917 were 99 percent female, had been the poor cousins in this union. But Boston had a strong suffragist community. The WTUL had its founding meeting there in 1903, and Margaret Haley, organizer of the Chicago Teachers Federation, had been a regular visitor to the city. She urged teachers to unionize, explained the victories for women workers in Chicago, and encouraged women to resist notions that demanding higher wages was selfish and unfeminine. In 1912, New England operators brought their first list of demands and complaints before New England Bell managers: shorter hours, higher pay (they made \$7.61 a week), lack of extra pay for split tricks (a nine-hour day split between morning and afternoon shifts), and overload of heavy-handed supervision. The Bell System had invested heavily in methods of scientific management.³¹⁰ This Boston operators' union, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), grew into the most militant white-collar union of the early 20th century under the leadership of Julia O'Connor. New England Bell softened its approach to the union, gave it a contract and introduced welfare work, vacations, lunchrooms, and company stock to the workers. Apparently, the phone company recognized that customers heard operators, and service with a smile was important to telephone growth. The work culture that Sue Benson describes for sales clerks was not all that dissimilar for operators; nevertheless, the phone company only needed to go so far in placating its workers. Higher wages during the inflation years of World War I were not part of the public picture. While men were dying in the trenches, women operators would sacrifice as well. The problem was that the war was not popular, and the telephone workers did not buy into the argument that they were supporting the war effort with wage cuts. Phone workers for Pacific Bell struck in November 1917 when 9,000 operators and 3,200 linemen went out, but coordination proved difficult. An anti-union campaign brought on by the California Better Business Association threatened the strike and its sympathizers. Finally, Samuel Gompers and the President's Mediation Commission were drawn into contract talks to get a swift settlement. On August 1, 1918, just months before the end of the war, the Postmaster General announced the take-over of the telephone industry "with the aim of insuring uninterrupted service."³¹¹

Albert Burluson, the anti-labor manager of the Post Office, attempted to lay down the heavy "invisible hand" of management on the phone workers without success. One fire in phone company militance had barely been squelched when another broke out in Wichita, Kansas, in December 1918. The war in Europe was over, and the unfair firing of a union representative brought community solidarity. Kansas police walked out at the same time, and the whole city

³⁰⁸ Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 47.

³⁰⁹ Greenwald, *Women, War and Work*, 10.

³¹⁰ John S. Schacht, *The Making of Telephone Unionism, 1920-1947* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 6-9.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

government was threatened with a general strike. But Southwestern Bell had Burleson, and the use of its own private police force defeated the strike. The New England Union of Telephone operators struck on April 15, 1919, after a meeting in Faneuil Hall. By June 1919, they had convinced Burleson to accept strikers' demands for salary negotiations, but not all the phone companies agreed with Burleson's settlement in the face of a general strike. The Bell system decided not to return to the status quo. As a result, more "hello girls" went on strike, but now the system was back into the private hands of a revitalized telephone company, and the community alliance the women had built fell apart. In the Twin Cities, the strike ended after 12 weeks in February 1919 with the same promise of arbitration and Burleson's same stalling. The failure of phone workers to produce a general strike in June 1919 came from the power of the companies in league with Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. Although New York State had some of the most militant phone strikers, it also had the Lusk Commission and its hearings from 1918 to 1920 that dismissed many teachers from their jobs for wartime subversive activities when their "crime" was clearly association with unions. Fear of reprisals characterized phone workers in their strikes as well. The greatest threat however, came with the lockout of public employees, notably police who proved so unreliable in the telephone operators' uprising.

Police Strike in Boston

In a typical labor struggle, the city reneged on a raise, inflation had depleted the buying power of the uniformed police, and they formed a union. Samuel Gompers had monitored with alarm the growing number of police and fire departments applying for union charters, but at a convention the rank and file, after going over the Haymarket Affair, welcomed these new unionists. The AFL said nothing about the right of public employees to strike and neither did the early union chargers of public employee unions. But when Boston's police went on strike in August 1919 the city locked 1,200 policemen out of their jobs. Governor Calvin Coolidge challenged the policemen's right to strike against the state. Gompers visited Boston the next year and begged the city to rehire some of the locked-out policemen, promising that they would renounce the union. Such steps had become common as local after local disaffiliated with labor and regained lost jobs.

The failure of public employee unions at this time came at a curious juncture with the unionization of telephone and telegraph workers. Though private interests during the war had employed most of these workers, the telephone and the War Labor Board nationalized telegraph wires. Although nationalization was temporary, the employees were typically warned that any strike action would be considered next to treason. After Republican Governor Calvin Coolidge gained national attention in the 1920s by declaring that police had no right to strike against Massachusetts, he became President of the U.S., dominating the executive office for much of the decade and ending further debate about public employee unionism.

Imaginary Work Sites and the Production of Desire

The final loss of labor's great war came with the defeat of the steelworkers in November 1919, but less celebrated accounts of public worker and telephone strikes mark a turning point in white-collar worker resistance. As Elizabeth Faue argues, many women union leaders looked to third party political movements and the promise of a labor party to settle accounts. Margaret Haley, whose organization had been drummed out of labor by a yellow dog contract, turned to the New

Majority in Chicago, while Myrtle Cain, the head of striking telephone workers in Minneapolis, emerged as a leader in the farm labor movement. Weaker because of the union defeats, workers polarized into camps of women's work, where only manipulation was effective, and man's work, where the strategy of company unionism and employee councils offered pale substitutes for autonomous unions. Fordism and the five-dollar-day belied the insecurity and hard driving opportunity for a few workers on the automobile assembly line.

The same policies were found in women's work but the imagery of where the work took place obscured the reality of the worksite. These beautiful palaces of consumption—Wannamakers, Hechts, Marshall Fields, Boscovs—were sites for a new kind of sales clerk, reshaped by managers and struggling for autonomy. Benson reports that managers introduced the same techniques of scientific management into the department store as in the offices and factory floors. Department store women had steady work—except that the two-track system involved a corps of part-timers. These part-time workers were eager to gain the higher paying full-time positions, so there was always a reliable pool of replacement workers should a shop girl not measure up to management's standards. Meanwhile, welfare schemes were on display: both sales clerks and telephone clerks were encouraged to vacation at company-sponsored hotels, where women journalists were invited to participate in the benefits of welfare capitalism and presumably turn in glowing articles.

Advertisers never gave a true picture of their copywriters' offices. Roland Marchand explains that the advertising tableau of the 1920s introduced Mr. Consumer, a visual cliché of an office worker, father, breadwinner, and employee whose window view was overlooking a series of factory plants or city skyscrapers. The implication was that this man was "master of all he surveys." Like the palaces of consumption, these imaginary offices obscured the work process. Such scenes did not portray real executive offices, much less "typical" offices where the majority of white-collar workers were stationed. Marchand could only find two examples where women appeared in these pictures as secretaries and clerks aiding Mr. Consumer. "The secretary or file clerk did not need to exercise a managerial surveillance over the factory," Marchand observes. The irony of this statement should not be lost on the historian of white-collar work, because in most production-oriented industries 'surveillance over the factory' was why departments of quality control, marketing, and distribution had been created. But the imagery Marchand recovers is true to this point, ". . . the exclusion of women from the opportunity to stand or sit by office windows helped reinforce the notion of an exclusive male prerogative to view broad horizons, to experience a sense of control over large domains, to feel like masters of all they surveyed."³¹²

In fact, these imaginary masters were having difficulty with the time management systems and efficiency experts they had adopted. "Pure Taylorism (or pure Leffingwellism) ignored the human factor," Sharon Hartman Strom writes of the development of office management ideas from 1910 to 1930, which were rigorously put to the test in life insurance companies, banks, electrical products industries, public utilities, department stores, and oil and rubber companies. Managers turned from harsher forms of scientific management to psychology to achieve management goals. Marion Bills of the Aetna Life Insurance Company tried taking the company beyond scientific management, but ran into resistance from office workers. While this resistance

³¹² Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 238-244.

was often passive or involved the cooperative efforts of clerical workers to undermine the system, it still frustrated office managers, who became disillusioned with the efficiency experts. Aetna managers acquiesced when clerical workers resisted Marion Bills's time studies measurement and incentive plans and agreed to ban time and motion efficiency experts and use cost accounting controls instead.³¹³

While clerical workers complained about the demoralizing effects of routine tasks, sales women expressed satisfaction with their jobs. One secretary from Travelers Insurance in Hartford described the company as "a huge concern in which she felt like a cog in a great machine—very impersonal and routine."³¹⁴ The nature of sales work required women clerks to identify with customers' needs and demands. Sales clerks complained about the unreasonable demands of customers, but they used the discount offered by department stores to purchase the same clothing as the middle-class women they served. This, too, was part of the sales clerk work culture that Benson argued emerged, a combination of what managers wanted in workers and personal characteristics. "Sales women could still act out their pride in their white collar status and their vision of themselves as the arbiters of fashion and consumption."³¹⁵

Marchand called it the Family Circle Tableau, "the products of modern technology, including radio and phonographs, were comfortably accommodated within the hallowed circle. Whatever pressures and complexities modernity might bring, these images implied, the family at home would preserve an undaunted harmony and security." Mr. Consumer at home appeared in "soft focus." "If the view from the office served as the dominant fantasy of man's domain in the world of work, another visual cliché—the family circle—expressed the special qualities of the domain that he shared with his wife and children at home."³¹⁶ Subordinate women office workers might have found the images of security and repose a welcome alternative to the harshness of Leffingwellism or Marion Bills's soft psychology. High turnover rates were characteristic of the most routinized white-collar jobs where women predominated. But it was not the image of the family circle that propelled women (and men) to quit these jobs, but money. "In a labor market characterized by widely interchangeable skills and high labor turnover, changing jobs was one way in which clerical workers could strike back at an individual employer, and carve out a measure of self-determination and dignity." Despite studies to the contrary, employers believed that women quit for marriage. However, while marriage was a factor in quit rates for women, it was not an important one. At Aetna, "Most women left jobs to take other ones."³¹⁷ Because of high quit rates, especially among native-born clerical workers, the industry looked for young clerical workers who would normally move into factory labor. The Curtis Publishing Company found that women who were not high school graduates and who were inexperienced accepted routinized work more readily. Curtis wanted women who had an economic incentive to work, who could be trained in a few days, and whose expectations for pay were at factory wage levels.³¹⁸

³¹³ Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter*, 234-247.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

³¹⁵ Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 6.

³¹⁶ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 248.

³¹⁷ Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter*, 193.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 251-252.

Women and men both turned into consumers. High wage packages in select industries created an image of prosperity, and new products were standardized and made affordable. Meanwhile, as the economy grew after 1920, the number of clerical workers continued to soar. Total clerical employment grew from 1.6 million in 1920 to 12.6 million in 1970. At the same time the female share of clerical jobs rose from 47 percent to 75 percent. The selling floor in department stores and other merchandising establishments also grew at astonishing rates—total employment in retail trade increased from 4.5 million to 11.1 million between 1920 and 1970. Women employed in retail trades grew from 0.7 to 5.1 million in the same years accounting for two-thirds of the hiring in retail trade, an increase of 15.5 percent of the market to 45.9 percent.³¹⁹

The Great Depression

Although job expansion in the clerical and public sectors and in white-collar labor continued into the Depression, the image of labor and the working world remained in the blue-collar, male industrial sector. Roland Marchand observes that, in the 1930s, advertisers were on the defensive as “advertising leaders found solace in interpreting the depression as a deserved chastisement for the follies and excesses of the boom years.” The reason for this, Marchand explains, was “because strenuous efforts were needed to pry money out of the hands of a suddenly tight fisted public.”³²⁰ In short, advertisers were reduced to the hard sell.

At the same time, John Lewis, head of the new Committee on Industrial Organization (CIO) of the AFL, mastered the art of the advertisers when he used Section 7a of the National Recovery Act in his 1934 organizing campaign: “Uncle Sam Wants You to Join the Union.” Industrial workers would probably have flocked into the CIO without the ad, but the iconography of the age proved significant. As Elizabeth Faue shows, the success of the CIO often relied on white and blue collar, gender, and race solidarity within the community, but the images were male, industrial, and blue collar. “How the culture of unionism expressed and constructed solidarity for men and women workers in a decade of unemployment crucially determined who would be organized and who would lead.”³²¹

The imagery in the labor papers was of a man who had grown in giant proportions to his world. He flexed his biceps, and at his feet were factories. Struggling against him were policemen, thugs, and fat-bellied aristocrats in top hats. Behind him an army of like-minded workers contributed to his size. Solidarity was masculine, and the site of struggle was in the factory. These symbols of labor defined the struggle of the era.

The Public Sector in the Depression

It is not surprising that historians have neglected the Depression’s effects on white-collar and public workers. This neglect arises in part from misconceptions about public work during this time. The majority of public workers did not have high wages, they did not keep their jobs, and they did not survive the Depression unscathed. Although the New Deal created many public works jobs, most assistance helped local governments continue public service, i.e. pay salaries

³¹⁹ Edwards, *Segmented Work*, 206-207.

³²⁰ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 300.

³²¹ Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle*, 70.

for police, firemen, and teachers. Often public workers' salaries were cut 10-30 percent, and local governments laid off many workers and cut back to a four-day workweek. Workers paid by scrip or not paid at all had their back wages returned by Reconstruction Finance Loans to banks and local governments, which kept the 10-25 percent wage cut instituted before the loans. Works Progress Administration (WPA) money for salaries for social workers, teachers, health authorities, and basic fire and police service became available to governments on the brink of bankruptcy. States passed laws that barred married women from public employment regardless of family circumstances.

Public workers never regained wage losses after World War I inflation in the 1920s, but the decade for them was one of guarded prosperity. The cities were collecting enough taxes, although corruption was rampant. Some city police were on the take, teachers continued to protest wages, and government unions pursued meager grievance procedures, while organized labor was kept at a distance. The collapse of tax receipts in the 1930s spelled disaster for most of these workers. Many cities were at the edge of bankruptcy, borrowing from banks and large insurance firms to make payrolls and bowing to these managers to bring in reform. Herbert Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation was such a scheme to pay bankers to roll over loans at terrific interest rates while self-appointed overseers forced wage concessions on public workers. While high unemployment characterized the private sector, low wages, 10-25 percent wage cuts, and four-day workweeks became the norm in the public work force.

Chicago public school teachers again took the lead in 1933 when a rally to protest the high discount work on bank issued scrip instead of paychecks led to a major riot in the downtown area. Teachers aimed their wrath at the banks whose stringency measures were responsible for the devaluation of pay and the use of scrip for wages. Scrip became more common for public workers as some cities like Fall River, Massachusetts, declared bankruptcy and stopped all payments. In Arkansas, nearly two-thirds of the public schools were closed in the early years of the Depression and only opened again when the WPA sent aid to rehire teachers. Public workers in nearly every city experienced cuts in wages, and their protests were heard in rallies and school board offices throughout the country. At the federal level, it was thought that more jobs could be had if federal workers were cut back the same as city workers. The four-day workweek became the norm in the post offices. A campaign against married women workers in white-collar jobs grew fierce in education, where married women often stayed in the schools after marriage. Old school board rules were resurrected, and married women teachers were fired in Cincinnati and threatened in several other cities. The public high schools and junior colleges filled with unemployed, who used schoolrooms and libraries as places to get out of the cold.³²²

White Collar Work in the Depression

Advertising giants in the Depression folded or cut back severely. N.W. Ayers, one of the biggest, spread work by instituting the four-day workweek and another cut in pay. All welfare work disappeared. No vacations, job shifts, double workloads, longer hours, or more services for customers. In February 1932, one of the 20 largest agencies, Kenyon and Eckhardt, imposed a 10 percent levy on salaries for an agency reserve fund and two months later added another 10 percent. Lay-offs were common, but companies tried to hold on to experienced copywriters,

³²² Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 131-149.

such as Erwin and Wase, who cut wages by half after drastic layoffs. Lord and Thomas employees lived on similar pay cuts, and some were dismissed.³²³ In department stores the number of part-timers soared. In one estimate, part-timers increased from 8 to 20 percent, while at some stores the full-time staff was cut by one-third. In Boston, sales women were more likely to be out of work than most women workers, but in other areas of the country sales women were able to keep their jobs albeit with severe wage cuts and longer hours.

Layoffs proved more severe in the phone companies. Bell System employment fell from 454,500 in 1929 to 270,500 by 1933. Married women were laid off, justified by policies of half of the school boards in the country and most of the federal government. Four-day workweeks and wage and benefits cuts proved normal. The only concession to its former welfare capitalism plan in telephone work was the incentive plan of dividend stock and the company union.

Unionism in the Depression

Unlike the manufacturing sector, white-collar and public employee workers did not experience a surge of unionism, although some public employee unions, like teachers and postal workers, experienced growth. Most efforts at unionization happened with public employee unions. AFSCME formed in 1935. Although primarily a white-collar union at its inception, it barred no public workers and came to represent all public workers at the local level, including maintenance men, nurses, health workers, and sanitation workers. The union first focused on supporting Civil Service laws at the state level and opposed patronage, but, after affiliation with the AFL, the union grew to resemble other industrial unions changing under the restrictions to unionization laid down by AFL President William Green's adherence to craft lines. Green demanded that public employee unions adopt a no strike clause in their charters in conformance with a rule which he thought Samuel Gompers had instituted in response to the policemen's strike of 1919, even though the AFL had not passed such a rule. Green was also responsible for keeping the organization of public workers on the state and local level separate from the federal level, but, at the time that AFSCME organized, Green had bigger concerns. John L. Lewis's split with Green and the AFL overshadowed the quiet negotiations of public workers, but the move had a dramatic impact on these new unions. When the CIO split off from the AFL in 1935, both AFSCME and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) had difficulty keeping members from leaving with Lewis. The openness of the new movement, the community aspect, and the left-wing orientation appealed to public workers. In 1938, the first public employee strikes occurred through WPA locals affiliated with the AFT. These new locals and their members were looked upon as the radical fringe in their own unions, but these workers put into words and actions much of the sentiment within public unions at the time. By staying within the AFL, the public unions remained in the most conservative wing of the labor movement, but they were constrained by the importance of local union affiliation with state and municipal labor federations whose political lobbyists were crucial to union survival.³²⁴

³²³ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 287.

³²⁴ Leo Kramer, *Labor's Paradox: The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO* (New York: John Wiley, 1962), 2-30; Joseph C. Gouldin, *Jerry Wruf: Labor's Last Angry Man* (New York: Atheneum, 1982).

White Collar Unions in the Private Sector

Samuel Gompers issued a handful of federal charters to small locals of office workers and stenographers in Indianapolis, New York, and Washington, DC. Plans for a national organization did not emerge until 1920, and by then the labor movement was so demoralized that little came of it. Moreover, these locals were all within unions or public sector jobs. The first union of private sector white-collar workers came in 1934 under the Office Workers, Federal Labor Union, 19708 of Toledo consisting of Toledo Edison Company clerical workers. Between 1934 and 1937 several hundred office workers' locals affiliated, but neither William Green nor AFL Secretary George Meany offered encouragement. They looked at these locals as organizations of communists whose work was to interrupt the business of AFL unions; protestations by the white-collar union leadership to the contrary proved fruitless. When the CIO began office work organizing in 1938, and radical WPA strikers caught the attention of office workers the same year, the AFL executive council became friendlier to white-collar workers. The first successful white-collar office strike took place in 1934 at the Macaulay Publishing Company, New York. Other white-collar strikes occurred in conjunction with industrial walkouts. In 1936, women office workers joined striking warehousemen at Gimbel's in Philadelphia. In Bayonne, New Jersey, 33 office workers at the Maidenform Brassiere Company maintained a successful picket line when 1,000 factory operatives refused to cross the line. The union was small and even inconsequential in the CIO's eyes, but it maintained a radical stance and continued organizing drives after the war from 1946 to 1948. The federal unions in the AFL labored under President Green's resistance. The Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) was not organized until 1945 after years of petitions to the AFL convention for affiliation.³²⁵

During the Depression, neither the AFL nor the CIO would come near the phone workers who participated in telephone company unions (also known as "associations" or "employee representative plans"). Such unions were declared illegal in the Wagner Act of 1935 that prohibited employers from maintaining company unions. However, it was not until 1937, when the Supreme Court upheld the Act, that the telephone companies granted autonomy to their former associations, and the character of bargaining changed for the unions. Even then unions did not affiliate with labor and resisted any incursions by the AFL or the CIO, because the organizations were still tied to the original concepts defined by the company ideology.³²⁶

World War II and the Post-War Era

Women in office and telephone work benefited most from the World War II economic boom. Pay differentials, shorter hours, and gentility of office work retained women, but opening skilled jobs in the manufacturing sector meant that throughout the war there were shortages in clerical work. Stability was another important draw for clerical workers. The Office of War Information predicted that nurses, teachers, and clerical workers would be needed after the war, and advertisers took advantage. One ad for Smith Corona shows a woman turning in her metal

³²⁵ Sharon Hartman Strom, "'We're No Kitty Foyles': Organizing Office Workers for the CIO, 1937-50," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work and Protest* (Boston: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1985), 206-234. See also Joseph E. Finley, *White Collar Union: The Story of the OPEIU and Its People* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 3-16.

³²⁶ Schacht, *The Making of Telephone Unionism*, 46-53.

manufacturing company button with a typewriter waiting for her handily in the wings. The War Advertising Council jumped at the opportunity to promote women in war work. The *Saturday Evening Post*, Curtis Publishing Company's flagship magazine, seemed to lead the enthusiasm for war time advertising by running many advertisements with no product pitch, but rather a message to get behind the war effort. The *Post* fiction stories portrayed women war workers as anxious to get back to secretarial jobs or to start families.

Not since the early days of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 that guaranteed the right of labor to independent organization had businesses in industries been summoned by government to contribute to wartime production. Managerial procedures and controls limited to integrated industries spread to smaller firms, where forecasting, accounting, and inventory control took on new forms and new ideas about flexibility and growth. Mass marketing included regional markets. New technologies, plastics, artificial fibers, and metal alloys, and the systematic application of science to production encouraged managerial development. As speed and volume increased, so did the need for managers.

In 1951, C. Wright Mills observed that white-collar workers had become part of an impersonal, hierarchical work world where the structure of the workplace, the modern skyscraper, bore a resemblance to the site of production—inside the vertical file. "As skyscrapers replace rows of small shops, so offices replace free markets. Each office within the skyscraper is a segment of the enormous file, a part of the symbol factory that produces the billion slips of paper that gear modern society into its daily shape. From the executive's suite to the factory yard, the paper webwork is spun."³²⁷ Within this web, William Whyte discovered, was the Organization Man, not workers or white-collar people, "in the clerk sense of the word," but middle managers who "take the vows of organizational life, and it is they who are the mind and soul of our great self-perpetuating institutions."³²⁸

The Unionization of Public Workers

In 1960, New York City schoolteachers launched their first one-day strike since the 1940s, and there was not a single arrest. These strikes ushered in an era of public employee strikes.³²⁹

Public employees labored under stringent anti-strike legislation. In 1946-1947, public workers accounted for most of the strikers in the biggest strike wave of the nation's history. Suffering under inflation, public workers abandoned reluctance to strike and formed picket lines. Teachers, whose union was older, larger, and more secure, dominated the public employee strikes of 1947. A walkout in Buffalo, New York, led to a general strike in the city. In reaction, New York legislators passed a no strike law for public workers and prohibited striking teachers from being rehired in the state. It was the toughest law in the country and stood as a challenge to public workers.³³⁰

³²⁷ Mills, *White Collar*, 189.

³²⁸ William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 3.

³²⁹ Mark H. Maier, *City Unions: Managing Discontent in New York City* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987) 47-76.

³³⁰ Maier, *City Unions*, 82; Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 175-195.

Public workers in other sectors of the country were organizing into unions. The deterrent after the war came with McCarthyism. In 1949, the United Public Workers, an organization of progressive and leftwing public workers, came under the scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the McCarran Committee, which held hearings in urban centers. Local organizations like the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution volunteered to keep records on the activities of unions. Membership lists from organizations designated as subversive by the Justice Department were matched with public workers' names on index cards, then turned over to civil service boards or the Board of Education. Many workers quit when their names appeared in public, while others laid low and refused to join unions.³³¹

United Public Workers (UPW) had been part of the fledging AFSCME until 1937, when UPW split from the organization and joined the growing CIO. Public workers agonized over affiliation with the CIO. Few joined, because they were attached politically to their central labor organizations, and, in the absence of formal mechanisms of collective bargaining and the right to strike, these central labor boards offered political leverage. John L. Lewis's CIO could offer no such urban infrastructure. Even the Wagner Act and the National Labor Relations Board had next to nothing to offer white-collar and urban employees. Public workers were excluded from the law. After the war, the unionization of public workers proceeded slowly as policemen, firemen, teachers, hospital workers, and city workers made deals with respective city negotiators.

The 1956 merger of the AFL and CIO gave public sector workers the resources to organize. Walter Reuther, head of the United Automobile Workers, insisted on taking funds from the CIO and devoting them to an Industrial Unionizing Department. These funds and new leaders, like Dave Selden and Albert Shanker in the AFT and Jerry Wurf in AFSCME, gave the unions a shot in the arm. Other unions, like the Transit Workers Union in New York City, led by Mike Quill, negotiated new contracts after a series of wildcat strikes. These short work stoppages proved successful, and, because they were short-lived and not sanctioned, they skirted the anti-strike laws and protected union leadership.

By the 1960s, public workers' open defiance of anti-strike legislation, the collapse of the red scare, and the aggressive organizing efforts of the new union leadership led to strikes throughout the country's urban areas. Workers formerly part of professional organizations came out openly for unionism and adopted militant actions to force collective bargaining. In 1962, 20,000 teachers struck in New York City. In 1968, 35,000 public school teachers in the education association tendered mass resignation in the Tangerine Bowl in Tampa to force the Florida legislature to increase wages. Hospital workers followed in the face of prohibitions against strikes and were chastised "as virtual public enemies" because of the hardships such walkouts caused patients.³³² Under the promise of higher wages, the ideology of professionalism broke down, and deterrents to unionization were temporarily breached.

³³¹ Ellen Schrecher, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism in the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 184-186.

³³² Martin Oppenheimer, *White Collar Politics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 23.

Civil Rights and the Issue of Workers' Rights

The Jim Crow system of segregation that dominated the South in the post-war era proved resistant to the biracial unionism of the CIO and the new unionism of white-collar workers. Nevertheless, union after union demanded the end of segregated locals, and in the South this insistence brought the first integrated voluntary associations into cities. These "mixed" unions gave a reputation of radicalism to the union movement in the South. In the immediate post-war era, it was difficult for unions to make big gains. But members of African-American communities were drawn into civil rights activities following the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956, and school desegregation activities in a number of southern cities. Memphis, Tennessee, was not unusual in this respect. African Americans who participated in the CIO drives of the 1930s and experienced the disappointment of attempts within the unions to re-segregate locals or avoid confronting Jim Crow laws had no illusions about the power of working people to unite against economic injustice. As the civil rights movement arrived in the city to desegregate lunch counters, bus stations, and other targets, unionized sanitation workers raised the issue of equality on the job. Garbage men had long been racially segregated; white workers had privileges that African-American workers had been denied. The 1964 Civil Rights Act addressed the issue of job discrimination, but the Memphis city council never questioned such common practices in city government. However, AFSCME locals did and challenged the national leadership of the union to come to Memphis to protest unequal treatment of African-American sanitation workers. Simultaneously, Martin Luther King arrived in Memphis. King's Southern Christian Leadership Council demanded economic justice and launched the "poor people's campaign." That the majority of African Americans had remained in poverty in the Memphis area served as evidence that the promise of economic justice by the CIO had not reached all areas of the community. Sanitation workers in Memphis were paid less than white workers and offered fewer days of work. The African-American sanitation men went on strike carrying the dramatic sign, "I am a Man."

This simple appeal to social and economic justice attracted Jerry Wurf, the AFSCME organizer, who in the early years of the civil rights movement brought his union rank and file to many rallies organized by the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), a civil rights organization. The drama of King's assassination on April 4, 1968, often overshadows the history of this merger of civil rights demands and urban African-American workers looking to unions to serve white and black members equally. As African Americans rose in the ranks of trade union leadership, they used their new political power to influence city hall and Congress.³³³

White-Collar Workers Unionizing

After the war, companies moved into the suburbs. This migration out of urban centers and into suburban industrial parks marked a change for white-collar workers. However, fragmentation and isolation did not remove these workers from the growing number of white-collar workers organizing in the public sector. In the Depression, these workers were spurred into unionization by sympathy with the union drives of industrial workers. For example, the Newspaper Guild organized by Haywood Brown brought media workers into a network of the screen actors guild,

³³³ Michael K. Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1993) 9-10.

the screen writers guild, and a host of radicals associated with Hollywood and Broadway. It united writers with traditional craft unions: printers, machinists, and other workers. Although these unions came under the same pressures of the red scare after the war, they became more visible as public workers grew powerful. Newspaper strikes, like the strikes of public workers in city government, required blue collar/white collar unity in collective bargaining. While newspaper offices were located in the cities, where these disparate workers could gather around a common symbol of oppression, suburbanizing also hit this industry, making organizing more difficult.

Despite these obstacles, insurance workers and health care companies tied to unions or large employee associations, benefited from unionization. The Union of Office and Professional Workers of America (the CIO group that left the AFL in 1937) had been successful in gaining members in direct mailing houses and insurance firms. However, efforts to establish a base within the newly formed trade unions met with resistance by industrial union leaders. Red baiting in the 1950s destroyed the fledgling union. Having once affiliated with the CIO, the union became an easy target in 1948 when Philip Murray, then CIO president, moved against radical unions in his organization.

Feminist Resurgence and the Refocus on White Collar

The rebirth of feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s contributed to the rekindled interest in office work organizing. Automation and deskilling contributed to the growth of white-collar unionization, but the business unions of the 1980s preferred to organize government workers. Indeed, "most of the net union growth since the 1960s has been in white-collar work, shifting the composition of organized labor toward white-collar members," Kim Moody writes. Almost all these workers were public sector. "From 1953 to 1976, the high point of public employee organization, over 5 million public workers were added to union roles, bringing the total to almost 6 million."³³⁴ White-collar workers in the private sector, particularly office clerical workers, remain untouched by big AFL-CIO organizing drives even though these workers suffered the most from automation and segmentation.

The 1973 Special Task Force study of Work in America noted a 46 percent increase in white-collar unionism from 1958 to 1968. In 1969, researchers studied 25,000 white-collar workers in 88 major industries and confirmed a marked decline in job satisfaction. "The office today," researchers concluded, "where work is segmented and authoritarian, is often a factory."³³⁵ The introduction of computer technology and other office automation in the last 20 years has compounded this assessment. "Our recent research has strengthened, if anything, our earlier conclusion. More and more evidence . . . documents the deteriorating quality of office work . . . the introduction of office equipment has extended management control over the work process to the detriment of workers job satisfaction."³³⁶

³³⁴ Moody, *An Injury to All*, 210.

³³⁵ "Work in America; Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, Welfare" (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 38.

³³⁶ Heidi Hartman, Robert R. Kraul and Louis Tiny, eds., *Computer Chips and Paper Clips: Technology and Women's Employment* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986), 127-128.

Computerized monitoring has been in effect in the military since the inception of video display monitors, but only recently firms and municipal offices have adopted the practice. Surveillance with cameras began in the jewelry industry and spread to mail order firms. Sometimes both techniques are employed, as in the case of a small metropolitan jewelry mail order firm where video display terminals were used for data entry and cameras for surveillance. ". . . [T]hey used the cameras to watch how hard you seemed to be working, when you got up to stretch or take a break, and your attitude at work." The high cost of this surveillance, however, makes its use prohibitive. Computer monitoring is cheaper than camera surveillance, with many business and accounting software programs generating reports on employee performance. The white-collar workers' organization 9 to 5 produced a survey of women and stress and found that about 17 percent of women who used computers reported that their work was "measured, monitored, constantly watched or controlled by machine or computer systems." The union completed the study in 1984; since then, several new generations of software programs make monitoring easier. Of those who were computer monitored, about 20 percent in clerical work and 14 percent in professional occupations reported higher levels of stress. Production quotas enforced through automated software packages have become a general feature of the computer revolution. Ironically, the programmers creating these programs have become monitored, while Silicon Valley, California, and the technological miracle of Massachusetts remained untouched by unionism.³³⁷

The feminist movement was the inspiration for new organizations, like the office workers' organization 9 to 5 and the stewardesses' union. It is not surprising that when 9 to 5 founder, Jean Maddox, worked as a secretary in 1952, most office workers covered under the OPEIU contract had no idea what the union was doing, or that the United Automobile Workers did not start organizing white-collar workers until 1961. The largest workplaces remained unorganized: DuPont, IBM, Hewlett-Packard. White-collar occupations have remained unorganized, while mechanization through computers and the Internet has isolated the work force. Deskilling in white-collar occupations can be seen in the "DotCom" revolution of the 1990s. While many companies touting new uses of the Internet to sell products thrived, others remained small organizations with sales work distributed nationally to work-at-home women tied to phones and computers. Saving on office overhead, promises of future earnings, and employee stock options, these start-up organizations died suddenly when investors realized how unrelated the companies' stock prices were to earnings. What has gone unreported is the sheer exploitation of white-collar workers and a sales force built on false promises of wealth. Thousands of laid off workers' labor was uncompensated or worse, and retirement funds were depleted.³³⁸

Conclusion

What is amazing about the Professional Air Traffic Control Organization (PATCO) strike is that it happened at all. The postal workers had been in negotiations in the summer of 1981, but they did not strike like the air traffic controllers. They were in a much older union, and their negotiators had experience. The labor movement remembered Albert Burleson and Calvin Coolidge, but the new, semi-professional, well-paid air traffic controllers did not. As C. Wright

³³⁷ Hartman, *Computer Chips and Paper Clips*, 144.

³³⁷ Bush, "I'd Prefer Not To," 361-372.

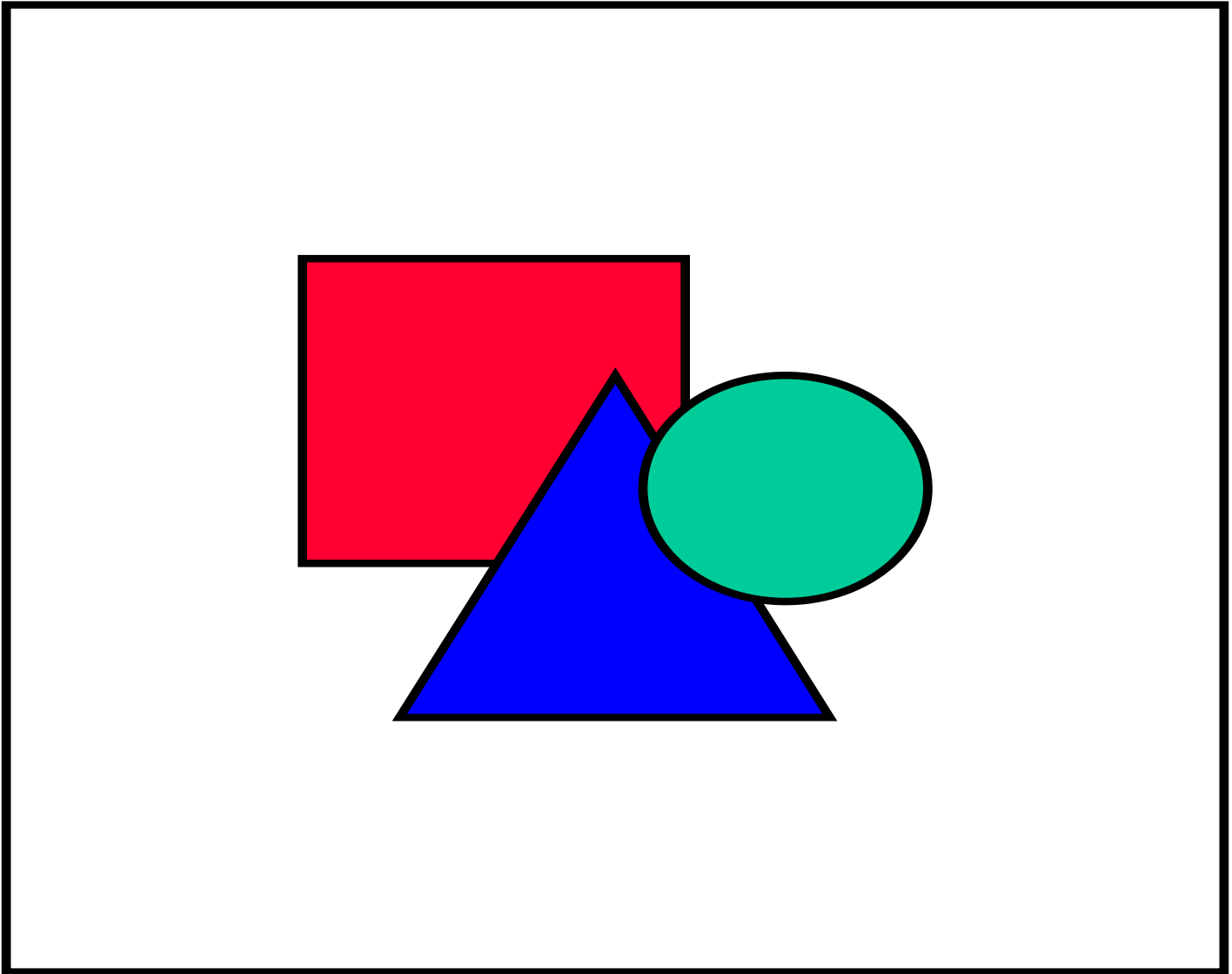
³³⁸ Rosemary Compton and Gareth Jones, *White Collar Proletariat Dispelling and Gender in Clerical Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

Mills observed, "[T]he forms and contents of political consciousness, or their absence, cannot be understood without reference to the world created and sustained by the media." White-collar workers had little grasp of the power against public employee unions. They failed to understand the danger of a lockout, and they had no alliances with women or African Americans in the labor movement. At the labor solidarity march in September 1981, AFSCME, the union with the most women and African Americans, brought the greatest number of marchers. They came as much in defiance of AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland as they did in favor of the highly paid PATCO strikers. The media coverage of the event, as in most cases, did not address the political meaning of the event, the historical background of such strikes, the significance that white-collar unionists dominated the demonstration, or that women's organizations played a prominent role. The major lesson that Kirkland took away from the gathering was that the labor movement was becoming more middle class, increasingly white collar, and representative of what had been termed the "salariat"—masses of salaried white-collar workers.

While unions recruited most workers in semi-professions and public employee white-collar unions, what has become obscured is the nature of deskilling in white-collar labor and the fragmentation of class alliance brought about by a labor movement. Despite Eric Olin Wright's argument that "it seems almost certain that the large majority of white collar employees, especially clerical and secretarial employees have—at most—trivial autonomy on the job and thus should be placed within the working class itself,"³³⁹ the white-collar section of the labor force is now greater than the manual labor force, a change from the early days of the CIO.

³³⁹ Richard Hyman and Robert Price, *The New Working Class: White Collar Workers and Their Organizations* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 134.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES



Ybor Cigar Factory, c. 1886-90.
National Park Service

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

EVALUATING AND DOCUMENTING PROPERTIES UNDER THE LABOR HISTORY THEME STUDY

Outlined in this section are registration requirements that agencies and individuals will use to identify properties that best illustrate or interpret key events, decisions, and individuals significant in labor history. Sub-sections describe property types associated with labor history, National Historic Landmark criteria used to determine national significance, and how labor history property types meet the criteria.

LABOR HISTORY PROPERTY TYPES AND ASSOCIATION

The context of labor history in America is represented by diverse property types associated with the following:

1. **Events** that symbolize worker protest such as strikes and lockouts. Examples of property types include field and waterfront sites, buildings, train stations, factories, homes, bridges, and railroad yards.
2. **Prominent persons** who were leaders in the field of labor history such as activists, union leaders, and political leaders. Homes or organizational headquarters most often represent labor leaders. A birthplace, grave, or burial would be considered for designation if it is for a historical figure of transcendent national significance and no other appropriate site, building, or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists. Likewise a cemetery would be eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, or from an exceptionally significant event.
3. **The work process** that identifies the role and place of labor, the changing nature of the work process, and how workers did their jobs. Property examples include mines, oil patch boomtowns, coal camps, logging sites and camps, canals, tunnels, mills, textile operations, factories, craftshops, sweatshops, apparel works, furnaces, and iron works.
4. **Working class communities** that portray workers' social, political, and recreational way of life. Examples of such places include housing, saloons, churches, theaters, and neighborhoods.
5. **Labor organizing** directly related to labor management and union organizing as workers protected themselves by using collective strength to overcome the growing imbalance of power between labor and capital to advance their quality of life and standards of living. Property examples include support group headquarters, union headquarters, labor party halls, and other union built structures associated with education and medical self-help initiatives such as labor colleges, chautauqua sites, libraries, and hospitals.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS CRITERIA

A property type's association described above must be considered nationally significant. The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess:

- Exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. A property must be evaluated in context with any other extant resources associated with the same event.
- A high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its significance. All properties must retain the essential physical features that define both *why* a property is significant (criteria and themes) and *when* it was significant (periods of significance).

Potential National Historic Landmarks are evaluated for their national significance according to a set of criteria.³⁴⁰ Cultural resources that may be nationally significant within the labor theme study will most likely be eligible under one of the following four National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria:

- **NHL Criterion 1. (Events)** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.
- **NHL Criterion 2. (Persons)** That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.
- **NHL Criterion 4. (Architectural/design significance)** That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction; or represent a significant, distinctive, and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- **NHL Criterion 5. (Districts of historic significance)** That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively composing an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance; or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture.

Ordinarily some properties are not considered appropriate for National Historic Landmark designation under the above criteria. These include:

- a site of a building or structure no longer standing
- cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historic figures
- properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes

³⁴⁰ National Historic Landmark criteria are contained in 36 CFR Part 65.4 [a and b]. General guidance in applying criteria and assessing integrity for National Historic Landmarks is found in the National Register Bulletin: *How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations*.

- buildings or structures that have been moved from their original locations
- reconstructed historic buildings

These properties may be considered if they have either transcendent importance, possess inherent architectural or artistic significance, or no other site associated with the theme remains. In addition, properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years must be of extraordinary national importance to be considered for National Historic Landmark designation. A property that is primarily commemorative in intent, such as a monument, may be considered for designation if its design, age, tradition or symbolic value has vested it with its own national historical significance.

APPLYING THE CRITERIA TO PROPERTY TYPES

This section identifies links to important events or persons that make properties nationally significant in labor history.

Properties associated with events

A property may be associated with specific one-time events or a pattern of events that made a significant contribution to the development of the country. A property may be associated with either a specific event marking an important moment in American labor history or with the labor movement that made a significant contribution to the development of the United States. The property must outstandingly represent its associated event, strongly and definitively convey and interpret its meaning, and must be considered of the highest importance.

A property associated with a labor event may be eligible under Criterion 1 if it meets one of the following:

- Portrays events that galvanized and hastened important national labor reform measures in areas such as working conditions, benefits, the right to organize, or management-worker relations.
- Denotes a vital turning point that was critical to the labor movement nationwide.
- Has symbolic value in representing the workers' struggle in the labor movement that is associated with a seminal event in national labor history.

Examples of National Historic Landmarks associated with an event include:

Matewan Historic District, Matewan, West Virginia

Site of a miner/company/federal armed battle in May 1920, precipitated by a coal strike demanding company recognition of the United Mine Workers of America; a move that was critical to the settlement of a nationwide coal strike. This event led to the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain in Logan County West Virginia, the largest and most violent labor uprising in American history.

Pietro and Maria Botto House, Haledon, New Jersey

Associated with the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike for better wages, hours, and working conditions, this house was the focal point for mass meetings of the strikers, their leaders and visitors. Nationwide publicity associated with this strike was instrumental in the development of Federal child labor and minimum wage laws.

Haymarket Martyrs' Monument, Forest Park, Illinois

This monument marks the burial site of martyrs in the 1886 Haymarket strike that serves as an enduring symbol of workers' struggles.



Haymarket Martyrs Monument

Photo by Robin Bachin

Properties associated with prominent persons

A property associated with a leader in labor history may have significance under NHL Criterion 2 if it meets any of the following reasons:³⁴¹

- The labor leader garnered social justice and civil liberties at the federal level for workers and made significant contributions to national economic and political affairs.
- The labor leader directly mobilized others across the country to act collectively in strikes and campaigns, and brought important labor causes to national attention.

³⁴¹ General guidance for nominating properties for their association with lives of individuals is given in National Register Bulletin 32: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons*.

To be considered nationally significant, these sites should:

- Symbolize the labor accomplishments of an individual to collectively lead others in national labor reform or influence national labor legislation or standards in an important way. To determine a definitive national role, it will be necessary to compare the individual's contributions with the contributions of others in a related field.
- Reflect the person's productive life and must have a significant association with the individual and his or her labor activity.

Examples of National Historic Landmarks associated with prominent persons include:

Frances Perkins House, Washington, D.C.

Frances Perkins became Secretary of Labor during the Great Depression and helped create and administer landmark legislation to relieve the nation's economic crisis, including a law guaranteeing the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.

Terence V. Powderly House, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Long time home of Terence Vincent Powderly who headed the Knights of Labor from 1879-1893; the nation's first successful trade union organization and who, for the first time, made labor a potent political force.



Terence V. Powderly House
National Park Service

Properties associated with the work process

Properties that represent the significant aspects of the labor work process may be significant under NHL Criterion 1 for representing a broad national pattern of the evolution of labor in the nation and NHL Criterion 4 for illustrating the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or method of construction representing a phase of labor history.

To be considered nationally significant, these sites should:

- Possess exceptional value in interpreting the labor process that set or represent significant industry standards in the field.

An example of a National Historic Landmark is:

Gore Place, Waltham, Massachusetts

This 1905-1806 mansion demonstrates and interprets the role and place of domestic labor. In this mansion, African-American butler Robert Roberts published a guidebook for domestics, *The Household Servant's Directory*.



Gore Place
Photo by Robin Bachin

Properties associated with working class communities

Properties associated with working class communities may have significance under NHL Criterion 5 if they outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture for a historic district, or NHL Criterion 1 for an individual site that represents the pattern of a worker's way of life or culture.

To be nationally significant, these sites should:

- Illustrate corporate sponsored community planning and managerial paternalism that served as a model or prototype in the industry.
- Represent immigrant, ethnic settlement, or racial segregation that reflect the broad national patterns of immigration and labor organization associated with labor demand.

An example of a National Historic Landmark is:

Ybor Historic District, Tampa, Florida

This community, founded between 1885-1886, contains the country's largest inventory of cigar industry buildings and a collection of workers' housing and ethnic clubs that represent an unusual multiracial, multiethnic industrial community in the Deep South.



Cherokee Club, Ybor Historic District
HABS, Fla, 29-Tamp, 9-1

Properties associated with labor organizing

Labor organizing sites may have significance under NHL Criterion 1 for their association with the development of the country's labor movement.

To be nationally significant, these sites should meet one of the following:

- Illustrate union initiatives to resist management exploitation that was crucial in shaping relationships between labor, capitol, and the federal government.
- Exemplify strong traditions of grass roots self-help that significantly addressed national issues in defense of workers' interests.

An example of a National Historic Landmarks associated with labor organizing is:

American Federation of Labor Building, Washington, D.C.

Headquarters for the American Federation of Labor from 1916-1950 that became the largest trade union organization in the world and worked with the federal government to improve working conditions.



American Federation of Labor Building
National Park Service

AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY - DRAFT

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 142

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The scope of this study included the entire U.S.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The identification and evaluation of labor sites was completed in partnership with the Newberry Library in Chicago.³⁴² To begin the study, more than 50 labor historians, local community and historic preservation leaders, and National Park Service representatives met at Lowell National Historical Park to discuss the theme study strategies. Seven labor history essays by qualified scholars were then commissioned for the study that broadly highlight the significance of labor in U.S. history. Essay topics included agriculture, extractive labor, white-collar and public sector work, manufacturing, transportation, household labor, and an essay on labor history on the national landscape. The intent of the essays was to produce a balance in terms of sectors of the economy, category of labor history, region, race, gender, and period of significance. Essays on labor history on the national landscape, extraction, manufacturing, transportation, and public and white-collar labor are contained in this multiple property nomination form. Essays prepared on agricultural and household labor were not included in this volume. For the story of agricultural labor, the National Historic Landmarks Survey has plans to update three previously published theme studies: *The Farmer's Frontier* (1959), *The Cattleman's Empire* (1959), and *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier* (1963). Following the National Park Service's Thematic Framework, adopted during the course of this study in 1994, individual properties associated with the story of household labor should be nominated under the theme *Developing the American Economy*.

To identify potential landmark properties, the Newberry Library team distributed approximately 400 mailings to State Historic Preservation Officers, state historical societies, labor organizations, and labor scholars requesting recipients to suggest sites that fit into the following categories:

1. Work processes: sites which illustrate the changing nature of the work process, such as the rise of assembly-line production
2. Events: sites associated with nationally significant events in labor history, such as strikes and lockouts
3. People: sites affiliated with significant individuals in labor history, such as labor and political leaders
4. Leisure establishments: sites which played a central role in the recreational and leisure activities of workers, such as amusement parks or theaters
5. Labor education: sites associated with working class education
6. Working class communities
7. Labor organizing: sites associated with union organizing and political activities, such as meeting places and union halls

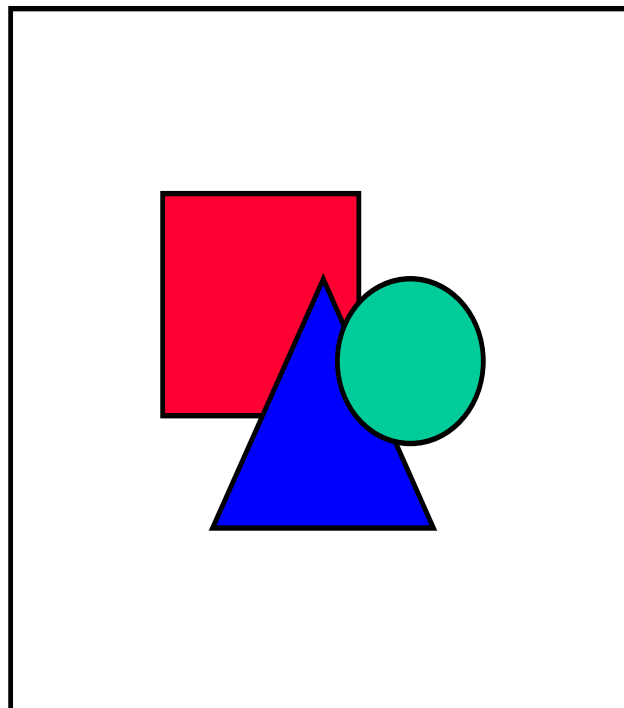
³⁴² The Newberry Library was selected after a process of bidding and review for this contract under terms issued by the National Park Service.

The Newberry Library historians also requested that the recipients suggest the ten most significant events, people, and transformative processes in American labor history to provide suggestions for aspects of labor history that might not be associated with a readily identifiable site. Over 200 people and organizations submitted suggestions for 297 sites. These included 81 sites for manufacturing, 69 for extractive, 37 for agriculture, 19 for public sector and white-collar labor, 18 for transportation, 10 for domestic labor, and 86 for general labor (with some overlap). From these suggestions the Newberry Library team produced a list of 52 sites deserving of further consideration. Twelve of these sites were nominated as National Historic Landmarks during the course of the theme study. Another 13 sites were identified by the National Park Service as those that should receive further consideration.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS NOMINATED UNDER LABOR HISTORY

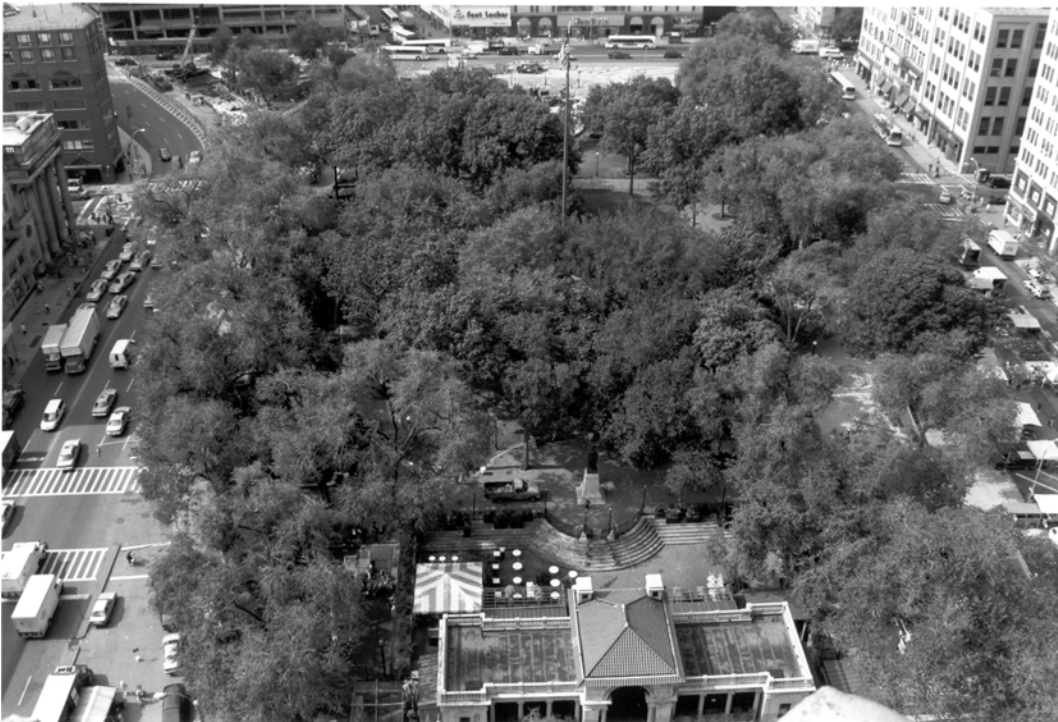
The 9 sites listed below were designated as National Historic Landmarks during the course of the study.

1. Bost Building, Homestead, Pennsylvania. This building served as union headquarters in the 1892 Battle of Homestead—a major confrontation between labor and capital in which the Carnegie Steel Company victory effectively destroyed unionism in the steel industry.
2. Gore Place, Waltham, Massachusetts. This 1805-1806 mansion demonstrates and interprets the role and place of domestic labor. In this mansion, African-American butler Robert Roberts published a guidebook for domestics, *The Household Servant's Directory*.
3. Kate Mullany House, Troy, New York. Home to a prominent female labor leader who gained recognition for successfully bargaining with laundry owners in the all-female Collar Laundry Union in the 1860s.



Kate Mullany House
National Park Service

4. Haymarket Martyrs' Monument Memorial, Forest Park, Illinois. A memorial to the four strikers hanged following an 1886 workers' rally protesting police brutality against strikers to achieve the eight-hour day in Chicago's Haymarket Square in which several police officers died after a bomb exploded.
5. Hamony Mills, Cohoes, New York. One of the largest American producers of cotton fabric for printed calicos and fine cotton muslins from the 1860s-1880s, the company developed substantial worker housing (managing more than 700 tenements) and contributed to the construction of schools and churches.
6. Kake Cannery, Kake, Alaska. This cannery illustrates trends and technology in the Pacific salmon canning industry from 1912-1940 associated with broad national patterns of immigration and labor organization.
7. Matewan Historic District, Matewan, West Virginia. Site of an armed battle precipitated by the 1920 coal strike to demand company recognition of the United Mine Workers of America; a move critical to the settlement of a nationwide coal strike. This event led to the largest and most violent labor uprising in American history.
8. Socialist Labor Party Hall, Barre, Vermont. Twentieth century labor union hall representing the labor movement, Italian immigrants, and social/political ideals.
9. Union Square, New York, New York. Location of the first labor day parade on September 5, 1882, that initiated the labor movement's drive for federal legislation to set aside one day annually in observance of workers' contributions and achievements.



Union Square

Photo by Robin Bachin

The following site has been nominated as a National Historic Landmark:

1. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Martinsburg Shops, Martinsburg, West Virginia. This complex is significant for its innovative 19th-century engineering, industrial architecture, and its association with the Great Railway Strike of 1877 that became the first mass strike in American history that reflected the new economic and social system in America as it shifted from an artisan to industrial society.

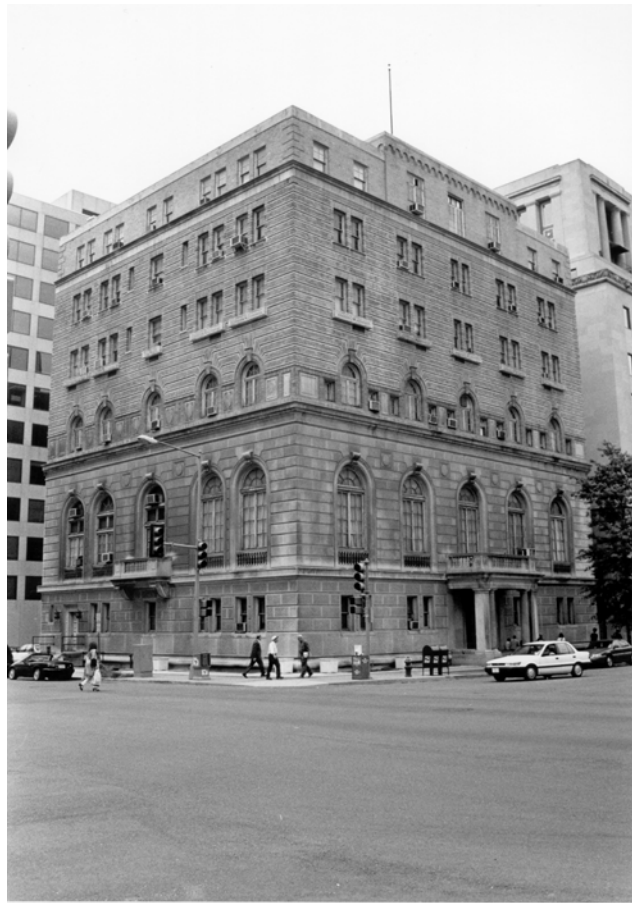
STUDY LIST FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CONSIDERATION

The following buildings and sites are recommended for further study before evaluation is completed. Sites marked with an asterisk are National Historic Landmarks under other themes, but which may also be nationally significant under labor history. This is not an exhaustive list for labor related sites.

1. Aliquippa Historic District, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. Site of a strike by union workers at Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation that led to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1937 milestone decision upholding the constitutionality of the 1935 National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act that gave workers the right to collective bargaining and prohibited unfair labor practices by business enterprises.
2. Bethlehem Steel, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. American Industrialist Engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor conducted time management studies at Bethlehem Steel between 1898-1901 in what became known as "Taylorism" or scientific management; a system that diminished labor relations because of its assault on craft skills and workers' autonomy by imposing managerial control.
3. Butte Historic District, Butte, Montana. The Copper Miner's Organization was founded here in 1878 and at the turn of the century Butte was known as the "Gibraltar of Unionism" with the largest local union in the U.S. of over 6,000 members. (This is an expansion of the Butte NHL Historic District)
4. Ford River Rouge Complex, Dearborn, Michigan. This complex was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1978 for its significance in industrial history. The nomination could be expanded to include the complex's significance in labor history, particularly the strike of 1941 representative of the history of manufacturing and anti-union sentiment by corporations.
5. Hopedale, Massachusetts. Site of Christian socialist utopian community that later became a planned company town associated with the textile industry and the creation of the Draper loom (Northrop Loom) that revolutionized textile spinning in 1856. Site has worker housing, services, parks, and facilities.
6. Hawk's Nest Tunnel, Gauley Bridge, West Virginia. Union Carbide's Hawk's Nest Tunnel (1930-31) is the site of the worst occupational health and safety disaster in U.S. history when an estimated 700 employees died due to dust (silicosis) exposure. Following Congressional hearings in 1936, Secretary of Labor, Francis Perkins, called the First National Silicosis Conference. While no national legislation came forth due to deadlocks, 46 states enacted laws covering workers afflicted with silicosis. Site may be significant in symbolizing

strength of capital and politics in overturning non-union minority work forces and the event may be a precursor to air quality standards (Threshold Limit Values) used by OSHA to protect workers' health.

7. Ludlow Tent Colony Site & Memorial, Ludlow, Colorado. In 1918 the United Mine Workers of America erected a memorial on the Ludlow tent colony site in recognition of one of the most dramatic labor struggles of the 20th century (1914) resulting in the death of women and children and bringing the plight of mine workers to national attention. For National Historic Landmark consideration the memorial must meet criteria exception (number 7) for commemorative sites.
8. New Century Guild, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1882, the Guild supported working women's needs with classes, a library, and health insurance plan, and was one of the earliest, largest and most successful organizations created to deal with issues that arose as women began entering America's workforce. Previously listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1993 (upgrade of documentation is recommended).
9. United Mine Workers Building, Washington, D.C. (National Register listed). Headquarters for the United Mine Workers Union during the American Labor Movement's height of political and economical influence and office to union president John L. Lewis (1937-1960), who was influential in shaping relations between labor, capital, and the federal government.



United Mine Workers Building
Photo by EHT Tracerics, Inc.

10. Pullman Historic District, Chicago, Illinois. Constructed between 1880-1884, Pullman is distinguished as both a model company town and location of the countrywide 1894 Pullman strike resulting in executive presidential intervention and first time use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890) prohibiting restraint of interstate trade to quash the unions (upgrade of documentation is recommended).



Row Houses, Pullman Historic District
National Park Service

11. Paseo Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri. Site of the 1937 convention of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP); the year in which A. Philip Randolph's union negotiated the first major labor agreement between a United States corporation (Pullman) and a union led by African Americans. The event became one of the most important markers since Reconstruction of African-American independence from racist paternalism and a model for other black workers. Other potential properties for comparison include office and meeting space associated with the BSCP's most aggressive and solvent division in Chicago at the Metropolitan Community Center (4100 South Parkway) in the 1920s, and two union headquarters locations at 224 East Pershing Road in 1927 and 3118 Giles Avenue in 1928.
12. Bread and Roses Historic District, Lawrence, Massachusetts. Site of the 1912 Bread and Roses Textile Strike that represents the first women-led multinational, interracial strike in the labor movement.
13. Tredegar Iron Works Richmond, Virginia. One of the nation's largest iron works from 1841-1865, this site was previously designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977 under industrial heritage as the main supplier of iron products to the Confederacy during the Civil

War. Further study could be conducted for its association with southern labor history in its heavy use of slave labor to cut costs.

14. Sloss Furnace, Birmingham, Alabama. Built between 1881-1882, this site was previously designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1981 in industrial heritage for its association with diversifying the South's post Civil War economy. Further study could be conducted for its association with advances made in African-American labor in the 1930s by the Congress of Industrial Organizations in its efforts to gain democracy for workers of all races.



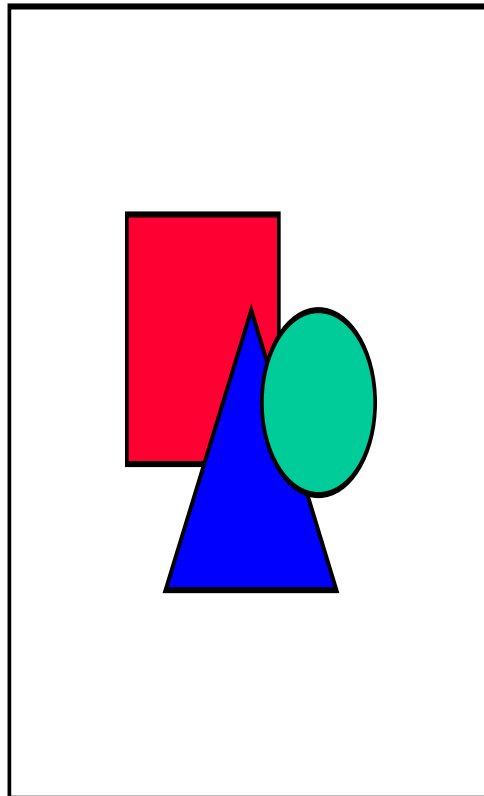
Sloss Furnace
Photo by Bill Wilson Studio

15. Union Miners Cemetery, Mount Olive, Illinois (National Register listed). This is the only union-owned cemetery in the nation. It was purchased for burial of four miners killed in an 1898 battle with company guards in Virden, Illinois. The cemetery also contains the burial site of mining activist Mother Jones who died in 1930, requesting burial with “her boys” and a 1936 commemorative memorial in her honor. This property must meet the exception criteria (numbers 5 & 7) for cemeteries and commemorative sites.
16. Women’s Trade Union League Office, Boston, Chicago, and New York City. In existence from 1903-1950, the WTUL was the first national association dedicated to organizing women workers with branches in Boston, Chicago, and New York City. The league helped women start unions in many industries and cities and also provided relief, publicity, and general assistance for women’s unions on strike. Among its most significant victories, the league worked to establish new safety regulations following the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory fire in New York City and gained minimum wage for women in 14 states between 1913 and 1923.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF LABOR HISTORY NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The following examples of labor history National Historic Landmarks were designated prior to undertaking the American Labor History Theme Study. This list is not exhaustive.

1. American Federation of Labor Building, Washington, D.C. Headquarters for the AFL from 1916-1955 that became known as the “National Labor Temple” and was considered the major spokesman for organized workers in the U.S.
2. Pietro & Maria Botto House, Haledon, New Jersey. In 1913 strikers protesting low wages and long hours in the country’s silk manufacturing capital rallied around this house to hear speakers during the Paterson Silk Strike that symbolized the American worker struggle, particularly by immigrants, to improve working conditions.
3. Eugene V. Debs House, Terre Haute, Indiana. Labor leader, radical, Socialist and presidential candidate, Eugene Victor Debs formed the American Railway Union and led the Pullman strike of the 1890’s. An idealistic, impassioned fighter for economic and social justice, he fought for workmen’s compensation, pensions and social security.
4. Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Building, New York, New York. Site of the first large scale strike in 1911 by women workers in the country and one of the worst industrial disasters in American history. Subsequent hearings led to a series of state laws that dramatically improved safety conditions within factories.



Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Building

Photo by Andrew C. Dolkart

5. Boley Historic District, Boley, Oklahoma. A 1903 camp for black workers employed by the Fort Smith and Western Railway giving them an opportunity for self-government.
6. Frances Perkins House, Washington, D.C. Frances Perkins became Secretary of Labor during the Great Depression, whereby she helped create and administer landmark legislation to relieve the nation's economic crisis, including a law guaranteeing the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.
7. Samuel Gompers House, Washington, D.C. Home to Samuel Gompers from 1902-1917 while he was president of the American Federation of Labor that became the largest trade union organization in the world. Gompers is recognized for establishing the pattern of labor's struggles for improved working conditions, hours, wages, and union recognition.
8. Terence V. Powderly House, Scranton, Pennsylvania. Long time home of Terence Vincent Powderly, who headed the Knights of Labor from 1879-1893; the nation's first successful trade union organization and who, for the first time, made labor a potent political force.
9. Graniteville Historic District, Graniteville, South Carolina. Started in 1846, this district contains a mill and the prototype of the Southern cotton mill village.
10. Ybor Historic District, Tampa, Florida. Founded between 1885-1886, this community contains the country's largest inventory of cigar industry buildings and a collection of workers' housing and ethnic clubs that represent an unusual multiracial, multiethnic industrial community in the Deep South.

Topics and Individuals Warranting Additional Study

Other topics and individuals identified within labor history may be significant at the national, state, or local levels. Examples of these are given below and known associated properties are included for consideration.

Strikes

Strikes are important for showing the pattern of intense conflict between unions, company operators, and the federal government between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries caused by industry competition as well as the risk to health and safety on the job. Some early strikes resulted in unusual treatment by management such as those in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (1892) and Paint Creek, West Virginia, (1912-13) where strikers were confined to bullpens for weeks. Other strikes ended in death such as the Herrin Massacre (1922) in southern Illinois, where coal strikers killed 20 guards, or the massacre in Everett, Washington, (1916) when local police and vigilantes gunned down a boatload of timber and sawmill workers.

Later mid-20th century strikes were defining moments in national history during and following World War II. A coal strike called by the UMWA during World War II, broke a pact by unions nationwide to not strike during the war and triggered a U.S. government takeover of the mines. During a nationwide coal strike in 1946, President Truman ordered government seizure of mines to continue production during peacetime recovery as workers protested over refusal of

bituminous coal operators to accept UMWA's proposal for an industry-wide Health and Welfare Fund. Other strikes and places represent various topics. Ethnic groups experienced biracial alliance and unionism as at the Dock and Cotton Council in New Orleans and strikes that reshaped labor relations such as the San Francisco 1934 strike and the auto labor strikes of the 1930s and 1940s.

The act of strikebreaking emerged as a lucrative business during the industrial era. Anti-labor detective and employment agencies gathered intelligence, supplied strikebreakers, and acted as provocateurs to greatly complicate union organizing efforts. Agency examples include Pinkerton, Burns, and the Railway Audit and Inspection Company of Philadelphia. Strikebreaking individuals are also prominent such as James Farley, (home in Plattsburgh, New York) who was known as the king of the strikebreakers from 1895-1913.

Mutual-aid Programs

These programs exemplified strong traditions of grassroots self-help among American workers and were an alternative to victimization of employer-controlled health care. Two such facilities include the Miner's Hospital in Park City, Utah, (1904) built by Western Federal Local 144, which reportedly now serves as a public library, and the Union Labor Hospital in Eureka, California, (1906) built by a timber and sawmill workers' campaign.

New Deal Programs

The New Deal government began to take a pro-labor role and an interest in worker well-being and jobs. Among the places associated with these programs are infrastructure and housing projects. The Fontana Dam and Fontana Village in North Carolina, erected between 1942-45, represents the new relationship between labor and federal government during the New Deal and WWII. Arthurdale in Preston County, West Virginia, (1933-1947) (National Register listed) is Eleanor Roosevelt's resettlement housing project for unemployed workers living in impoverished conditions. The project was created under the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act, which in part provided funds for a subsistence homestead program administered by the Department of Interior.

Labor Education

The 1920s experienced a nationwide workers' education movement that was active in labor organizing, political movements, and social reform. The best-known residential labor college was Brookwood Labor College in Katanoah, New York, which lacks the high integrity needed for National Historic Landmark designation. Highlander Folk School in Summerfield, Tennessee, no longer exists after the state government revoked its license in the 1960s and auctioned off the property. Other examples include the Working People's College, in Duluth, and a park in Six Mile Run, Pennsylvania, that was the site of the first union organized chautauqua to educate workers in 1924.

Health and Safety Catastrophes

Some catastrophes are important for influencing state or federal legislation. Monogah Mines 6 and 8, Fairmont, West Virginia, are the site of an explosion in 1907 that killed 361 workers and resulted in formation of the U.S. Bureau of Mines. Consolidation Coal Company's Number 9 Mine in Farmington, West Virginia, experienced a mining disaster in 1968 resulting in 78 deaths that catalyzed both democratic reform within the UMW and monumental federal health and safety legislation.

Individuals Significant in Labor History

Significant individuals include labor organizers, labor leaders, and federal personnel influential in creating labor laws. Labor leader Richard L. Davis was a former miner and a pioneering advocate of interracial unionism and was the first African American to become a national officer of a major union in the nation when he was elected to the UMWA's National Executive Board. William D. Haywood was involved in the Western Federation of Mines and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Haywood later became an influential mining activist and an early champion of race-blind unionism. Haywood's union, the IWW, first met in 1905 in Brand's Hall. Child miner John Brophy dedicated much of his life to workers' causes. He became a leading figure in the workers' education movement of the 1920s and 1930s, was appointed a special representative of the UMW in 1933, and became national director of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) in 1934, where he played prominent roles in strikes and union organizing drives. In the 1940s and 1950s, he held positions on federal labor boards and committees. William B. Wilson was a former child mine laborer elected to Congress in 1906, where he established the Children's Bureau in the Department of Commerce and Labor and was later appointed first Secretary of Department of Labor in 1913.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES



Poster for Works Progress Administration encouraging laborers to work for America. Federal Art Project [between 1936 and 1941].
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, WPA Poster Collection, [LC-USZC2-837 DLC].

I. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

This section lists all references contained within the historic contexts and is arranged by each of the respective essays: Marking Labor History, Extraction, Manufacturing, Transportation, and Public and White-Collar Workers. A list of links to historical resources on the Internet is included at the end of this section.

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INTERNET RESEARCH SOURCES

The Department of Labor Web site, www.dol.gov has a historical sketch of the department and a Labor Hall of Fame listing 24 individuals honored posthumously. Each listing includes a statement of significance and a reading list. The Web site also contains links to historical resources ("History eSources") from the Department of Labor, other federal civilian agencies, and selected non-government bodies.

The Web site www.uniononline.com/html/history lists labor history events by time periods.

Timothy G. Borden's Labor History Bibliography is available via the Organization of American Historians Web site. It contains an annotated bibliography by century. Topics include slavery and race, gender, and theoretical perspectives. Go to www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/labor/labor%2Dbib.html.

Illinois Labor History Society Web site, www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/curricul.htm includes "A Curriculum of United States Labor History for Teachers," especially valuable for placing labor events within a national context.

A Short History of American Labor, www.unionweb.org/history.htm, contains a brief history of more than 100 years of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY - DRAFT

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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Labor's Heritage is a scholarly-based journal of original documented work published quarterly by The George Meany Memorial Archives. Back issues are listed on their Web site and available for purchase individually or collectively. For information go to www.georgemeany.org/magazine.html.

APPENDIX A.**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CRITERIA**

Labor history properties important at the state and local levels, as opposed to the national level, may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places primarily under Criteria A, B, and C. Placement of the historic property within local and state historic contexts is necessary to determine relative significance. The requirements for meeting the evaluation of criteria for National Register eligibility of properties as they relate to the *Labor History Theme Study* are generally discussed below.³⁴³

National Register Criterion A: Event. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- In order to be eligible under National Register Criterion A, a property must retain integrity from the historic period and be associated with some event, or represent some broad aspect of labor history locally, statewide, or regionally.

National Register Criterion B: Person. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

- To be eligible for the National Register, the property must retain integrity and be associated with a person who is significant within the historic context and must be associated with the individual's labor activity. The person should have played a significant role in the development of labor history at the local, state, or regional level.³⁴⁴

National Register Criterion C: Design/Construction. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

- Properties eligible for the National Register under Criterion C must retain integrity and be associated with the labor process.

³⁴³ National Register properties must meet one of the four National Register criteria and possess integrity. National Register criteria are contained in 36 CFR Part 60. General guidance in applying the criteria and assessing integrity for National Register nominations is found in the National Register Bulletin: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

³⁴⁴ General guidance for nominating properties is given in National Register Bulletin 32: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons*.